

**HE'S NAFF, HE'S BLAND - AND HE'S BACK**  
Gary Barlow is the new Cliff Richard

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# INDEPENDENT

Monday 16 March 1998 45p No 3,559

Newspaper of the Year for photographs

## Brown set to soften middle class attack

Exclusive

By Colin Brown and Diane Coyle

GORDON Brown will delay for at least a year plans to tax child benefit in his Budget tomorrow after intervention by Tony Blair to ease the expected £1bn squeeze on the middle classes who helped to give Labour its landslide victory last May.

The Prime Minister spent Friday at Chequers going through the Chancellor's Budget plans and informed sources have told *The Independent* he personally watered down some of Mr Brown's proposals to avoid alienating the middle classes. "Tony is a moderator and they spent Friday with Gordon's enthusiasm for radical change being overridden by Tony's political nous," said the Government source.

Mr Brown will boost spend-

ing on health and education, but will reinforce his reputation as the "Iron Chancellor" today by announcing legislation requiring more openness from the Treasury in future about spending and taxation calculations.

Petrol, cigarettes and alcohol will all be hit by big hikes in duty by the Chancellor, with an expected 27p on a gallon fuel as part of a "green" middle-class agenda. But the new green taxes on motorists and the green belt, including car-parking at out-of-town supermarkets, will be delayed for 12 months.

There will be an £80m boost for the arts, with £40m to scrap charges at the Victoria & Albert museum, the Imperial War museum, and the National Maritime and Science museums.

Taxing child benefit for those on the 40 per cent higher rate of income tax could go ahead next year to finance a £700m increase in spending on measures to reduce unemployment

...while Sarah's interest rate rises



Public life: Gordon Brown and his girlfriend, Sarah Macaulay, at a birthday party yesterday for the son of Mr Brown's political secretary, Sue Nye. The couple refused to comment on a newspaper report that they were soon to marry. At the party, Ms Macaulay was asked about the report. "I was interested to read that too," she replied, with a smile

and poverty. Mr Brown has also had his sights on scrapping mortgage tax relief, which he has reduced to 10 per cent, in spite of Mr Blair's fears about upsetting the middle classes.

The centrepiece of the Budget will be the £1bn Working Families Tax Credit, to be introduced in April next year, at the same time as taxing child benefit with an uprating to sweeten the pill. Childcare Credit will replace Family Credit to help low-income families by making sure work pays, but it will not be as generous as recent reports suggested, leaving Harriet Harman, the Secretary

of State for Social Security, with a tough job in selling the package. The moves will have a mixed affect with childcare costs; *The Independent* is campaigning for a tax allowance for all working mothers to help with childcare.

The Bishop of Liverpool, the Rt Rev James Jones, warned the Chancellor against "forcing mothers to work. "We must recognise parenting is work," he said.

Mr Brown has long had child benefit in his sights, but Baroness Castle, the veteran Labour campaigner, and John Edmonds, the union leader,

who will today lead a mass lobby of Parliament to defend the welfare state both warned that it could hit women who are now taxed separately. The new low-starting rate of income tax of 10p in the pound for the low paid will be announced for next year.

Today Mr Brown will set out plans to bind himself and successors to prudent fiscal policies, making sure future governments are legally required to set out clear rules for tax and spending policies and stick to them with a "Code for Fiscal Stability". He is determined to make sure an government can

play fast and loose with taxpayers' money.

Clauses in the Finance Bill following tomorrow's Budget will form the legal basis for a code requiring every government to publish its own fiscal rules and supporting documentation. The fiscal code will be based on five principles: transparency, economic stability, responsible tax and spending policies, fairness and efficiency. According to a source in the Treasury: "For too long fiscal policy has been conducted behind closed doors." Which leaks to believe, page 8

David Walker, page 15

## 'Threaten me or my family and I'll belt you' - Prescott

JOHN PRESCOTT moved to kill more smears against himself and his son, Jonathan, by warning that he would "take a belt" at anyone who threatened his family, writes Colin Brown, Chief Political Correspondent.

The Deputy Prime Minister last night told *The Independent* he would not "throw away the trust of the people", which had been given him on 1 May by allowing the smears to go unchallenged. He made it clear he would "hit back as hard as I can" at any claims made against him, or his family. "I will never sit there and be petrified by them. I will hit back as hard as I can as these allegations and slurs. I think that people expect that from me."

Mr Prescott and his close advisers believe others are seeking to sell more stories around Fleet Street from the so-called "dossier" compiled by two Hull men describing themselves as researchers who were interviewed last week by police over alleged break-ins, and the rifling of Mr Prescott's dustbins.

Mr Prescott complained the "vendetta" against him, stemming from local council infighting involving councillors suspended from the Labour Party, had now spread to his son.

Mr Prescott's son was also incensed by weekend reports of his alleged company dealings and this week will call on the chairman of the Press Complaints Commission, Lord Wakeham, to intervene.

The Deputy Prime Minister said he believed there should have been a front page apology in the *Sunday Times* after its allegations last week that his son had profited from a sale of former council houses had been investigated by his Whitehall departmental auditors, who found no impropriety.

The Deputy Prime Minister met Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary watchdog, at Mr Prescott's Whitehall office on Wednesday to discuss whether he should have declared in the register of members' interests the receipt of £27,500 from the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust in a blind trust to pay for party research into regional policy.

On the BBC's "Breakfast with Frost" programme, he told David Frost: "I have had a controversial life, I take my knocks like everybody else and I don't moan. I do get a bit annoyed when it gets near to the family," he said.

Mr Prescott's aides contacted the Frost show on Saturday after being contacted at 2 pm on Saturday by the *Sunday Mirror* about allegations it published yesterday that a clothing company in which his son was a director had collapsed owing £312,861 in tax.

He said it had happened four years ago, but his son was being targeted because his father was the Deputy Prime Minister.

*The Independent* exclusively reported on Saturday that the *Sunday Times* had used a reporter to infiltrate the Hull East constituency Labour Party to try to find stories about Mr Prescott.

Letters, page 14

## Woman tells of gropes in Oval Office

By Mary Dejevsky Washington

BILL CLINTON looked set to experience one of the darkest hours of his presidency last night, when a former White House employee, Kathleen Willey, claimed on prime-time television that he kissed and groped her in the vicinity of the Oval Office four years ago. The alleged incident, originally recounted by Ms Willey in testimony given in the Paula Jones sexual harassment case

last year, has been strongly denied by Mr Clinton, including under oath.

Mr Clinton's version is that he did embrace Ms Willey, who - he said - was "extremely agitated", but that there was "nothing sexual" about it. The contested incident occurred on 29 November, 1993.

Don Hewitt, executive producer of the programme, CBS network's flagship "Sixty Minutes", said after recording the interview that Ms Willey, who is now 51, came over as highly credible. Her account "occu-

pied 40 minutes of the programme and - unusually for American television - a nine-minute segment was said to have run completely uncut.

Ms Willey was expected to repeat her charges that Mr Clinton embraced her in "more than just a platonic hug", tried to kiss her on the lips, and placed her hand on his genitals, which she said were "aroused". Although the lurid details have figured in US press reports of Ms Willey's accusations in recent days, they gained a new and shocking immediacy by coming

from the alleged victim herself.

Additionally devastating for Mr Clinton is that Ms Willey is seen, unlike a number of Mr Clinton's accusers, as a mature woman of good character who has not hitherto sought publicity or redress. With her late husband, she was a fund-raising member of the Democratic Party and an enthusiastic supporter of the President.

Sixty Minutes injected only one element of doubt into Ms Willey's version, producing a woman who said she had been asked by Ms Willey to lie about

the Oval Office encounter. But this did little to detract from the emotional force of Ms Willey's first-person account.

The interview came at the end of a weekend that began equally disastrously for the President with the release of a 700-page legal dossier that included the transcripts of statements and testimony given by Ms Willey and four other women who have been linked with Mr Clinton during his political career. The dossier was compiled by lawyers for Paula Jones, the woman who claims

Mr Clinton propositioned her for oral sex in an Arkansas hotel room six years ago, in an attempt to demonstrate a "pattern of behaviour" by Mr Clinton.

His approval ratings appeared to be suffering from the remorseless accumulation of charges for the first time.

A poll for the NBC television network, taken before the weekend, showed only just over half of those asked now approving of the President - a drop of more than 10 points over two weeks.

## Britain overspending on Millennium, says EC

Exclusive

SERIOUS tension has arisen between the Government and Brussels over the amounts of money being spent on marking the millennium in a number of poor British regions, writes Katherine Butler.

The European Commission has warned ministers in writing that it will not sanction EU funding for one-off Millennium projects which "distort" long-term economic regeneration strategies negotiated with Brussels.

"The climate is a complete squeeze on public expenditure in the UK but it is a bit depressing that there is lots of millennium money floating around yet local regeneration seems to be the last priority," said one Commission source.

privately, Brussels is poised to unveil plans to phase out its own spending in many UK regions, but officials voiced fears that priority will be given to celebrating the millennium rather than using available national money to replace lost EU funds.

Under the EU principle of "additionality", European grant aid must be "matched" by the national government. Increasingly, officials complain, local communities are finding it difficult to secure the matching cash they need to trigger Brussels money.

The Government has secured European cash for three Millennium projects: Dnncaster's "Earth Centre" costing a total of £130m, another called "Magna" in Rotherham, and Hull's "The Deep".

Regions face cut, page 10

### Today's news

#### ROM shake-up

A SHAKE-UP of the Royal Opera House is likely to be urged on the Government, with the Royal Opera being privatised but the Royal Ballet continuing to be funded by the taxpayer. Page 3

#### Sunday opening

THE transformation of the traditional British Sunday was underlined yesterday by the Halifax which opened 200 offices as part of a three-month pilot scheme. Page 5



## Cannabis may be made legal for medical use

CANNABIS could be cleared for medical treatment within two years for victims of multiple sclerosis, glaucoma and other chronic illnesses which may be helped by the drug, after a "very positive meeting" between the BMA and the Chief Medical Officer for health, Sir Kenneth Calman, writes Colin Brown, Chief Political Correspondent.

Dr Vivienne Nathanson, who met Sir Kenneth last week, told *The Independent* last night the CMO had given the go-ahead for speeding up the research to enable synthetic forms of the drug to be made available in about two years.

"The CMO indicated that the government is very much in favour of what we are doing and the need for research to be developed for cannabinoids for different medical conditions."

Dr Nathanson said there were already available a number of forms of cannabis in synthetic form and research protocols could now be designed with a small number of people to move swiftly from the research stage to treatment.

Patients will not be allowed the drug in its raw form, but it could mark a breakthrough in the Government's implacable opposition to the legalisation of soft drugs.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, yesterday rejected calls for a Royal Commission on the legalisation of cannabis by MPs including the Tory MP David Prior, who admitting using the drug for some years in his 20s, in a survey by LWT's Jonathan Dimbleby programme. It found one in five of the 81 new MPs had tried illegal drugs.

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## Trouble with the wives who are a changin'

In 1988 Bob Dylan embarked on a tour he still hasn't finished, writes Andrew Buncombe.

It has been named the Never Ending Tour and has seen Dylan, apparently unconcerned about musical consistency or his reputation, dragging himself, his nasal whine and his greatest hits, around the world's venues. Dublin last night, Cardiff tonight, San Francisco next week.

Some nights, against the odds, he finds inspiration and fires new life into the old standards. Sometimes he rips them apart, rewriting the structure - even entire sections - of songs that were the soundtrack for a generation. Sometimes he just sounds tired.

"Everything was flabby - the music, the singing, even the people in the audience," recalled Greil Marcus, author of last year's book on Dylan, *Visible Republic*, after witnessing one performance.

"Nobody brought any energy with them and they didn't leave with any either."

How his legions of fans will react to yesterday's revelations that Dylan may secretly have had two more wives and a number of children by them, is unclear.

The claims are to be made in a forthcoming biography of Dylan written by Susan Ross, who says she has dated Dylan on and off for the past decade. If the claims are true they will certainly force many of his fans to rethink their interpretations of some of Dylan's most famous songs.

"She makes love just like a

### IN THE NEWS BOB DYLAN

woman," he sang in 'Just Like a Woman' from 1966's *Blonde on Blonde*. Yes, Bob, but which woman?

Miss Ross, is said to have supported Dylan when he was troubled to hospital with heart trouble less than a year ago.

Dylan, who recently won three Grammy Awards for his 1997 album *Time Out of Mind* (his son Jakob won two for his work with the band The



Wallflowers), is alleged to have fathered at least nine children, four more than he has officially recognised. The book also claims that Dylan, 59, has been married three times.

The singer himself claims his only wife was former Playboy bunnygirl Sara Lowndes, who he married in 1965 and divorced in the 70s.

Miss Lowndes had custody of their five children and during their marriage break-up Dylan wrote one of his most famous and acclaimed albums, *Blood on the Tracks*.

In the forthcoming biog-

raphy, which Dylan himself is said to be currently reading a draft, it will be said that in the mid-80s he secretly married one of his backing singers, by whom he has had another child.

When this relationship came to an end he is said to have married again during the 80s and had one or two more children. Cynics may say he started touring again simply for a break.

Dylan has a reputation for being as enigmatic and hard to track down as some of his more obscure lyrics. "There is a power in darkness and in keeping things hidden," he has said.

With this in mind most fans will perhaps not be that staggered to learn that he might have been keeping a few things secret.

Through rough and smooth, most fans have remained loyal to Dylan ever since they heard those magical early songs that spoke of optimism and change.

He might not have had a song in the Top 40 since 1978 and until last year's *Time Out of Mind* he'd only produced one album of critical acclaim in years (*Oh, Mercy*, in 1989). Hits such as "Blowin' in the Wind" were written as long ago as 1962 and in 1987 he somewhat ominously agreed to play the part of a washed-out singer in the poorly received film *Hearts of Fire*.

But that does not matter. There will always be people for whom Bob Dylan, the troubadour from the mid-West, has no match.



It's All Right Pa: Bob Dylan, who is claimed to have fathered nine children - four more than he officially acknowledges. Above: His former wife Sara Photograph: London Features

**BOB AND GOD**  
Bob Dylan seems to have knocking on Heaven's door for as long as he has been famous. He was born Jewish, changing his name from Robert Zimmerman, and in his early years he was stoutly atheistic.

In the seventies his attitude changed again and he became a born-again Christian and produced two overtly Christian albums, *Slow Train Coming* and *Saved by a Passing Bell*. In 1977, asked by the *Times Literary Supplement* to name the most overrated and underrated books of the past 75 years, he gave the Bible as the answer to both questions.

In his most recent turnabout he has been showing an interest in Catholicism, last year playing for the Pope.

#### ONLY THE OLDIES

While younger audiences may still lap up the Beatles and the Stones, it seems they are not so tuned on by Dylan. "He is not a core artist," said Trevor White, head of music at Virgin 125. "Artists like Dylan are used as an occasional historical thing." His birthday last year was marked on Radio One by two Dylan cover versions and one original. However, old hippies still like him. Michael Eavis, organiser of Glastonbury - Britain's

largest pop festival - has confirmed he is lining him up to play at this year's event.

#### DYLAN AND DOPE

Dylan may be personally responsible for corrupting the minds and bodies of our young people. Er... well maybe not, but he is charged with introducing the young, impressionable and clean-cut Beatles to cannabis.

The year was 1964 and Dylan was on a British tour when he got to meet the Fab Four, who up to then thought a joint was something you bought at the butcher's.

Within a few years the boys were skinning up in the lavatories at Buckingham Palace and writing drug-inspired songs such as *Tomorrow Never Knows*.

#### AT LEAST THEY COULD SING

Bob Dylan once sang: "All I have is a red guitar, three chords and the truth." The simplicity of many of his songs has made them popular with buskers down the years and some of his best-known songs were made famous by other people: *All Along the Watchtower* by Jimi Hendrix, *Mr Tambourine Man* by The Byrds and *Blowin' in the Wind* by Peter, Paul and Mary.

## Sell-off plan for the Royal Opera

By David Lister  
Arts News Editor

A SHAKE-UP of the Royal Opera House is likely to be urged on the Government, with the Royal Opera being privatised but the Royal Ballet continuing to be funded by the taxpayer.

The Royal Opera House itself would be funded directly by government as a receiving house for the two companies.

The three-way split is, according to senior sources, the most likely recommendation to be made by the committee under Sir Richard Eyre looking into the future of opera in London. It will report to Chris Smith, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, next May.

The privatisation of the Royal Opera would be a culmination of years of public unease at the large amounts of subsidy it swallows up, and recent unease over management ineptitude. The Royal Ballet, currently enjoying critical acclaim and with much cheaper tickets, will continue to receive Arts Council cash.

The ROH itself could not easily be privatised, since £78m of lottery money has gone into its redevelopment, and the public would need to have a stake in its future.

The English National Opera, meanwhile, would continue as an entirely separate company, either at its present home at the London Coliseum or possibly at the Sadler's Wells building in north London.

If the Government does decide on privatising the Royal Opera and funding the ROH as a receiving house, there will be question marks over the future roles of the boards of the company and the ROH, composed of many of the great and the good of the arts world. There



Sir Richard Eyre: Report on opera due in May

will also be question marks over the roles of ROH chairman, Sir Colin Southgate, and chief executive, Mary Allen. Ms Allen, who was criticised by the Culture Select Committee last year, would be unlikely to want to stay on as chief executive of a receiving house.

The recommendations of the Eyre report will come into force after the completion of the ROH's £214m rebuilding programme in autumn 1999.

The Government's ownership of the ROH would also give it a say in determining ticket prices, something the Labour administration would want, again because of the amount of lottery money in the new house, and because of the party's commitment to "people's opera".

During the past 12 months, the Royal Opera Company was twice forced to take emergency measures to stave off liquidation. It has changed both chairman and chief executive and been the subject of a scathing select committee report. Mr Smith is said to be especially keen on privatisation, and significantly refused to rule it out when he appeared before the select committee last autumn.

## Book prices could be chopped by a fifth in new price war

By Nigel Cope

CONSUMERS could soon enjoy cheaper books as the sleepy British book market heads for a price war that could knock 10-20 per cent off the cost of a typical hardback or paperback.

According to a report published today, the book battle will be sparked by the invasion of the UK market by aggressive American companies which started last year. They are keen to open large book superstores, similar to those found in the United States. The report's authors say that with shop rents in the UK being far higher than those in the US, the new entrants may need to cut prices in order to generate the high sales they need to make their investments pay.

"It could mean a much more aggressive approach on price," said Clive Vaughan, of Verdict retail consultancy. "It may be localised but it could nevertheless have a significant effect on prices charged across the country."

The report suggests that the biggest losers in a price war would be the smaller independent booksellers and WH Smith, which recently sold Waterstone's to a new company that will merge it with Dillons. WH Smith, which recently bought the John Menzies chain, has been losing out to specialist chains like Waterstone's and the supermarket chains which are selling cut-priced best-sellers.

The US invasion began in earnest last September when Borders, a US book superstore retailer, bought Books etc. Bor-

ders is opening large book shops that also serve coffee and feature areas where customers can browse through magazines and surf the Internet.

Barnes & Noble, another American book retailer is also keen to find sites in this country but has yet to open any stores.

The new American entrants are likely to try to offer consumers something different to stake a claim in a market dominated by Waterstone's and Dillons which account for one in five of Britain's book sales. Waterstone's has also been opening superstores.

A price war would be good news for consumers who have been faced with continued high prices despite the collapse in 1995 of the Net Book Agree-

ment which allowed publishers to determine book prices.

Since then only popular best-sellers and classics have had their prices cut while prices of other titles have risen sharply. A new hardback that is out on the best-seller list is now typically priced at £15.99-£17.99 while paperbacks often cost £5.99-£6.99.

However, Waterstone's claimed that price was not the major consideration for book buyers. Alan Giles, who runs the combined Waterstone's-Dillons business, says consumers find the range of books on offer, the knowledge levels of staff and the environment of the stores all more important than prices.

"I don't think the Americans will try to build market share on price," he said.

## Radio 4 gets ready for fury of Middle England

MONTHS of speculation over the future of Radio 4's programming will end today when the new schedules are unveiled by the BBC, writes Steve Boggan.

The corporation has faced fury from some sections of its Middle-England audience over plans to axe many well-loved programmes, but Matthew Bannister, Director of BBC Radio, promised that listeners would not be disappointed.

"It will be good to talk about what is actually going to be in the Radio 4 schedule rather than what is not," he said. "We have some great programmes on the way."

Mr Bannister and James Boyle, the Radio 4 Controller, have faced a storm of protest from listeners concerned about the axing of programmes or changes in broadcast timings of others.

Favourites to be abandoned include *Kaleidoscope*, *Afternoon Shift*, *Sport On 4*, *Breakaway*, *Week Ending*, *Does He Take Sug-*



Matthew Bannister, Director of BBC Radio, and Jenni Murray of Woman's Hour

ar? *Mediumwave*, *Call Ed Storton*, *Medicine Now*, *Science Now* and *Going Places*.

Among those whose timings will change are the *Today* programme, which will run from 6am through to 9am, knocking *Farming Today* and *Yesterday in Parliament* from their regular slots.

A final decision on the future of *Yesterday in Parliament* will be made by BBC governors when they meet on Wednesday, following concerns raised by politicians.

Two other favourites, *The Archers* and *Woman's Hour*, presented by Jenni Mur-



ray, are also facing changes. *The Archers* will gain a sixth weekly episode, on Sunday evenings, but the running time of each edition will be cut by two minutes.

Mr Boyle said the changes, which will come into operation on 1 April, are being made to stem the tide of listeners switching to other stations.

Research has shown that many people switch off as soon as the *Today* programme finishes. The BBC intends to hold on to these listeners by introducing new, livelier programmes.

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# Costs warning over student fees

By Ben Russell  
Education Correspondent

THE COST of charging university tuition fees will soar to £15m a year by the time the scheme is fully implemented, student leaders claim today.

Research conducted by the National Union of Students to coincide with the second reading of the Bill to introduce £1,000-a-year student fees, suggests the administrative cost of the new system will be almost double government estimates.

NUS president Douglas Trainer said: "Fees will cost too much money to administer and raise no new funds for the quality of education. It is time for the Government to give up on the legislation and rethink the financial arrangements for students and for British higher education."

Ministers estimate the fees scheme will cost no more than £8m out of the £150m that fees are expected to yield in October. A spokeswoman for the Department for

Education and Employment said money had already been made available to cover costs as part of this year's university budget settlement.

The NUS figures were based on an internal study carried out by Portsmouth University, which found fees would cost £200,000 a year to collect from the year 2000, when all people in higher education will be paying towards their tuition.

Academics at Portsmouth are preparing to take on extra staff to deal with processing bills for students, dealing with local authorities and providing extra support for those who find themselves in difficulty.

Student leaders, who will deliver a 100,000-signature petition protesting at the fees to Downing Street today, are hoping to capitalise on backbench anger at the plans.

The Teaching and Higher Education Bill faces a tough passage through the Commons after peers inflicted three major defeats on the Government in the Lords. Amend-

ments included a measure to reintroduce student grants, which are due to be replaced by loans.

Vice-chancellors are also launching an offensive today to persuade ministers to plough back all the fees income into higher education.

Universities back the fees, arguing they are the only way to reinvest in a university system hit hard by cuts over the past decade. In a submission to the Government's comprehensive spending review, the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals, argues that the fee income should form part of an investment package running to nearly £1bn a year for three years.

Chief executive Diana Warwick said: "We need adequate public funding so we can get on with the job of expansion, maintaining quality and boosting national economic competitiveness. There will be a cost of collecting the fees, which makes it more imperative that money from fees comes to higher education."



Stage conference: The director Sir Peter Hall with Elaine Paige as Celleneuve in rehearsal for Molière's *The Misanthrope*, which opens at the Piccadilly Theatre in the West End of London later this month  
Photograph: Nigel Norrington

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## Vigil for Stephen Lawrence on eve of inquiry

MORE THAN a hundred people took part yesterday in a candlelit vigil for murdered teenager Stephen Lawrence, on the eve of the start of a High Court inquiry into his death. The crowd at Eltham, south-east London, where the black 18-year-old was stabbed to death in April 1993, sang hymns and listened to readings and pleas for people to come forward with evidence on the racially motivated killing. Cheryl Slowley, Stephen's aunt, described the vigil as "very hopeful" and said she was glad to see so many people turn up to support the family.

The case has been through an inquest, independent police reviews into the investigation, a private prosecution by Stephen's family and an Old Bailey trial, which collapsed in April 1996. The inquiry was announced by the Home Secretary Jack Straw last July. Last Friday, Scotland Yard announced that a senior police officer in the case had been recommended for disciplinary action for neglect of duty.

## Baby's body found in bag

A NEW-BORN boy whose body was found dumped in a bin bag close to a children's theme park died of asphyxia, police said.

A full-scale murder inquiry was launched last night in a desperate hunt for the child's mother who police fear is almost certainly in need of urgent medical attention.

Police said a second person, possibly the husband or boyfriend of the woman, may have been involved in the death or the dumping of the baby close to Gulliver's World fun park in Warrington, Cheshire.

Although the baby's death is being treated as murder, Detective Chief Inspector John Hester, leading the inquiry, said he had not entirely ruled out the possibility that he was dealing with a tragic accident. He said part of the umbilical cord was still attached to the baby, leading them to believe that the mother gave birth without proper medical supervision.

## Dolly's status confirmed

French scientists say that they have performed experiments which help confirm that Dolly the sheep is indeed the clone of an adult mammal - something that some American observers have questioned, writes Charles Arthur.

A French team say they have managed to reprogram cells from a calf, and implant them in an egg cell to create a new cloned embryo which is now growing. Jean-Paul Renard, the team's leader, said they had taken the unusual step of announcing the work before its official publication to add "supplementary arguments" to the debate over whether Dolly really came from the cloning of an adult cell.

## 'Indy' man in record run

THE record for the first ever 50-mile solo urban run is being claimed by a London advertising executive. Nigel Dixon, group head of classified advertising with *The Independent* and *The Independent on Sunday*, ran seven circuits between Canary Wharf in east London, where the newspapers are based, and Liverpool Street Station, in a time of 11hrs 9mins.

It is believed to be the first time the distance has been run without stopping and not on a running track. It is expected to be ratified by the *Guinness Book of Records*.

Mr Dixon hopes to raise £5,000 to provide medical care in south Sudan. Donations can be made on 0171 293 2612.

## Lottery numbers

Six winning tickets shared the jackpot of £8,825,430 in last night's National Lottery draw, each scooping £1,470,905. The winning numbers were 26, 15, 18, 2, 38, 36 and the bonus number was 42.

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## Cole Turkey

THIS HAS been a period of severe withdrawal pains for those of us who were addicted to Michael Cole (below). From his persuasive appearances on television to his swishing rebuttal letters to the *Spectator*, we've had to go "Cole turkey" since the former spokesman for Mohamed Al-Fayed retired two weeks ago. He abruptly cut off all his old telephone and fax lines when he quit the chintz-covered executive offices on Harrods fifth floor and disappeared into the PR hell of anonymity. Some said he had gone abroad, destination unknown. But Pandora has learned that the PR maestro is definitely in this country. A source with access to the Fayed inner sanctum says that Cole received a lucrative £1m farewell package and is currently entertaining an offer to teach corporate communications at Harvard University next year. It's difficult not to be envious of those lucky Ivy Leaguers. How enriching it would be to learn the art of spin-doctoring from the man who, when referring to the non-existent nurse who heard Princess Diana's last words, coined the irrefutable phrase: "He [Mr Fayed] was approached by someone with good reason not to be identified."



Recently entertaining an offer to teach corporate communications at Harvard University next year. It's difficult not to be envious of those lucky Ivy Leaguers. How enriching it would be to learn the art of spin-doctoring from the man who, when referring to the non-existent nurse who heard Princess Diana's last words, coined the irrefutable phrase: "He [Mr Fayed] was approached by someone with good reason not to be identified."

## Short break

CLARE SHORT, Minister for Overseas Development, went "on leave" Friday. It is rare for any minister to take an official "leave" when Parliament is in session. Was she ill? Was there some other problem? No, she was merely going off to spend three days with her family, including her long-lost son. One year ago, how many ministers would have declared an official "leave" just to go away for a family weekend? As far as Pandora is concerned, this is a refreshing example of what politically correct behaviour ought to mean. "She's been planning it for some time," said her office.

## Sunday hype

IT'S FAR too early to judge the new *Sunday Business*. Andrew Neil's pink paper for "the first day of the working week" launched five weeks ago. The informal consensus seems to be fine design, good writing, but a shortage of important stories. Perhaps it was to rectify this impression with the punters that page two of yesterday's *SB* carried a banner boasting of "breaking important financial news that our rivals have to follow".

Of the six so-called "scoops", Pandora took exception to three. The *SB* claims to have broken the story about David Montgomery's wish to sell Mirror Group shares in this newspaper on 1 March, but this was hardly news. See, for example, John Diamond in the 21 January *Evening Standard*: "Monty, it's pretty certain, wants to sell". Regarding the *SB*'s claimed 1 March scoop about Ian Sri Khoo's wish to sell his 15 per cent in Standard Chartered, we carried that story in the *Independent* on 23 February. Finally, the *SB*'s claimed 8 March scoop about Granada and Littlewoods forming a TV shopping joint venture was long preceded by an *Independent* story of 4 February that said, "Littlewoods is trying to assemble a consortium of retailers to run a TV channel."

## White House Willey

THIS WEEK is cutting up even rougher than usual for President Bill Clinton. Last night, American television broadcast an outlandish 40-minute interview with Kathleen Willey, the widow of a former Clinton friend and associate, who was allegedly groped in the White House. Even more ominous, yesterday the *New York Post* broke the story of yet another young White House intern due to testify in front of the Washington grand jury later this week. Despite all of Hollywood's efforts to ride piggyback on the scandal, films like *Wag The Dog* and *Primary Colors* can't compete with the bizarre reality. The name of this new 24-year-old former intern is Sherrie Densak.

Pandora

Not so long ago, the British Sunday was sacred. Now even the banks are opening. Louise Jury reports

WHERE New York never slept, Britain was once the sleepy Sunday capital of the world. But not anymore.

Now there are Sunday supermarkets, Sunday afternoon drinking and the full 24-hour, seven-day-a-week society moved a step nearer yesterday with Sunday banking.

Few other countries have seen the traditional day of rest eroded to such an extent. In Israel, the Jewish Sabbath holds supreme and in many Arab countries, banks and other services close on Friday. In the Indian sub-continent, banks are closed on Sundays.

Yesterday, Halifax, Britain's biggest mortgage lender, opened the doors of 200 branches in a three-month pilot Sunday opening scheme, believed to be the first of its kind in Britain, for its 20 million customers.

Spokesman Mark Hemingway said: "We know that people want to shop on a Sunday - it's the second busiest day of the week in terms of customer transactions (after Saturday). We think there is a demand for our services too, but the only way to find out is to do it."

Two hundred of its 900 branches opened from 11am to 3pm to coincide with the spring house-buying rush.

The Halifax's network of estate agents already open on Sundays and the bank, which converted from a building society last year, considers it logical for people to arrange their mortgage on the same day as they find their dream home. The first mortgage was arranged within hours of opening yesterday.

Mr Hemingway said: "It's



Money talks: Town crier Alan Myatt addresses Sunday shoppers in Camden Market

Photograph: Kalpesh Lathigra

certainly breaking with tradition. If you look back 15 or 20 years, some of the traditional banks, like Barclays and Lloyds, only opened until 3pm Saturdays and not at all on Sundays. Things have changed completely.

Some banks and building societies have opened on Sundays in the run-up to Christmas and the Abbey National and Midland Bank have a handful of branches in supermarkets.

Barclays, which pioneered Saturday opening in 1982, is to open six branches on Sundays

soon after a trial in Milton Keynes. Britain's first 24-hour telephone banking service, First Direct, opened in 1989. A spokeswoman said Saturdays were almost as busy as Mondays and it had found business on Sundays "steady". "Flexibility suits most people and other banks and building societies are beginning to realise it," she said.

However, the move towards a society that is never closed does not please everyone. The Banking, Insurance and Finance Union (BIFU) has expressed concern at extending its members work duties. And the Keep Sunday Special campaign, which lost the fight against Sunday supermarket opening, remains critical.

John Alexander, the campaign manager, said: "We are moving towards the 24-hour society, but our information is that people think it's getting a little bit out of hand."

Knowing how long it took to arrange a mortgage, it was "ridiculous" to suggest that people needed a bank open on a Sunday in case they bought a

new house.

"A World Health Organisation survey showed there was strong medical evidence that we do need a shared day of rest if you're going to have any kind of family life. All the other European countries accept this entirely and have some form of restrictions," Mr Alexander said.

"We think the backlash will come in Britain. Obviously we won't go back to square one, but we can stop some of the more ridiculous claims that are being made."

## Sunday world

### Germany

Banks, supermarkets, department stores, DIY centres and even corner shops are forbidden by law from opening.

Travellers, however, are exempted from the inconvenience meted out to ordinary folk, and as a consequence filling stations have been busily converting themselves into small supermarkets, while many railway stations have been transformed into shopping malls.

— Imre Karacs

### France

For the laid-back Parisian, Sunday still remains a day of rest. Out of deference to the requirement for good food, the bakeries and butchers open for a few hours in the morning. But by 1pm, even the small neighbourhood shops will join the supermarkets and department stores in shutting their doors.

Families can enjoy the cinema or a theatre matinee and many museums are half-price. But getting to them may be tricky as the public transport is limited and eating afterwards may be a problem as many restaurants are closed.

— Louise Jury

### United States

Sunday mornings in central Washington and all is quiet bar the occasional jogger, runner and cyclist. But elsewhere, people are getting into their cars and going to church - church-going still defines Sunday in much of America. Washington included.

The afternoon is for shopping and the malls are all open. Banks, however, stay firmly closed.

— Mary Dejevsky

### China

In Peking, Sunday and shopping have become synonymous. Those with money elbow their way through the crowds in the newest shopping centres and department stores. Those without can be seen lining the pavements selling trinkets to passers-by.

Sunday is a not a day of rest. It is a day for commerce - even though all banks and government offices are shut.

— Teresa Poole

## Food chain bans genetic food

THE FROZEN food chain Iceland is expected to announce this week that its 770 stores will reject food which may have been made with genetically modified soy from the United States, writes Charles Arthur.

In a move which aims to break the indifference among British retailers to the steamroller effect of American agribusiness interests, the company will rely on food made using the dwindling US sources of the non-modified crop.

Business opposition to the inclusion of genetically-modified soy in food has waned in the past few months, despite widespread evidence that consumers are against it. In January, the British Retail Consortium, representing 90 per cent of retailers, said it would no longer request US soy producers to separate the genetically-modified crop from the non-modified varieties.

EU scientists say the use of modified soy does not carry a risk but Dr Michael Antoniou, a lecturer in molecular biology at a London hospital, commented: "Unlike a BSE epidemic or chemical spill, once released into the environment genetic mistakes cannot be contained, recalled or cleaned up, but will be passed on to all future generations indefinitely."

Meanwhile other Britons living on the island are said to be terrified that the culprits or their associates might still be at large. Richard Coward, a friend and neighbour of the murdered couple, Roy and Judith Eccles, said he had not been able to sleep since the discovery of the couple's bodies at their villa in the village of Kaminarata last Thursday.

Mr Coward, 52, said: "We are living in fear of what is going to happen to us. We do not know if there is a vendetta against British people or people who have retired and are enjoying life... I have got my gun beside me. That is how most Britons are living here."

Mr Eccles, aged 55, and his 49-year-old wife sold their home in St Neots, Cambridgeshire, and moved to their retirement home in October.

## Greek isle terror for Britons

TWO MEN, believed to be Albanians, were still being questioned last night by police investigating the murder of a British couple on the Greek island of Cephalonia, writes Andrew Boncombe.

Meanwhile other Britons living on the island are said to be terrified that the culprits or their associates might still be at large. Richard Coward, a friend and neighbour of the murdered couple, Roy and Judith Eccles, said he had not been able to sleep since the discovery of the couple's bodies at their villa in the village of Kaminarata last Thursday.

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## Is this the real face of William Shakespeare?

By Andrew Buncombe

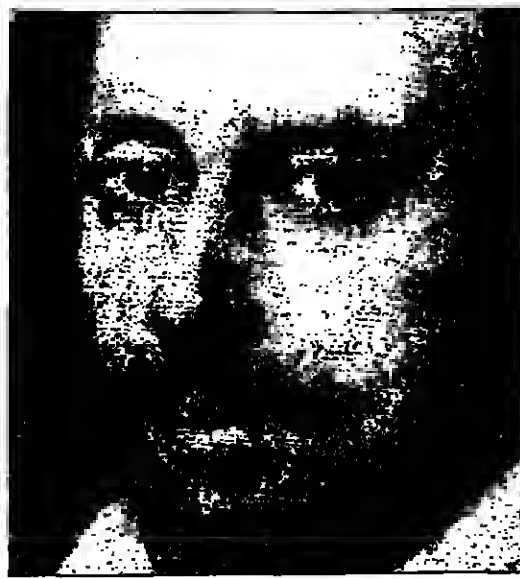
"GOD has given you one face and you make for yourselves another."

Shakespeare may have known something when he wrote the above lines which appear in one of his most famous plays, *Hamlet*.

His own face – or rather, faces – have been at the centre of a long-running academic debate which some scholars believe may now finally be over.

It was reported yesterday that German academics from Mainz University believe they have found new evidence to prove what Shakespeare really looked like. Analysis of the playwright's death mask has revealed a series of facial marks and idiosyncrasies that correspond to those found on busts and portraits.

Hildegard Hammerschmidt-Hummel, professor of English at Mainz University, has been examining the death mask since 1995. She said scientists working at the Technical University of Darmstadt had used a photographic technique to measure three-dimensional surfaces of the mask to create an accurate model of Shakespeare's face.



Triple trouble: The classic view of Shakespeare (above left), the National Portrait Gallery's version (above right) and his death mask (right) which may be a fake

curate model of Shakespeare's face.

They used the same technique on a marble copy of a bust of Shakespeare, kept at Charlecote Park in Warwickshire. Through this analysis they discovered three small

marks on the left eyelid which could be matched to marks on the death mask. Further tests have matched the facial dimensions of the mask with two portraits of Shakespeare, one of which hangs in the

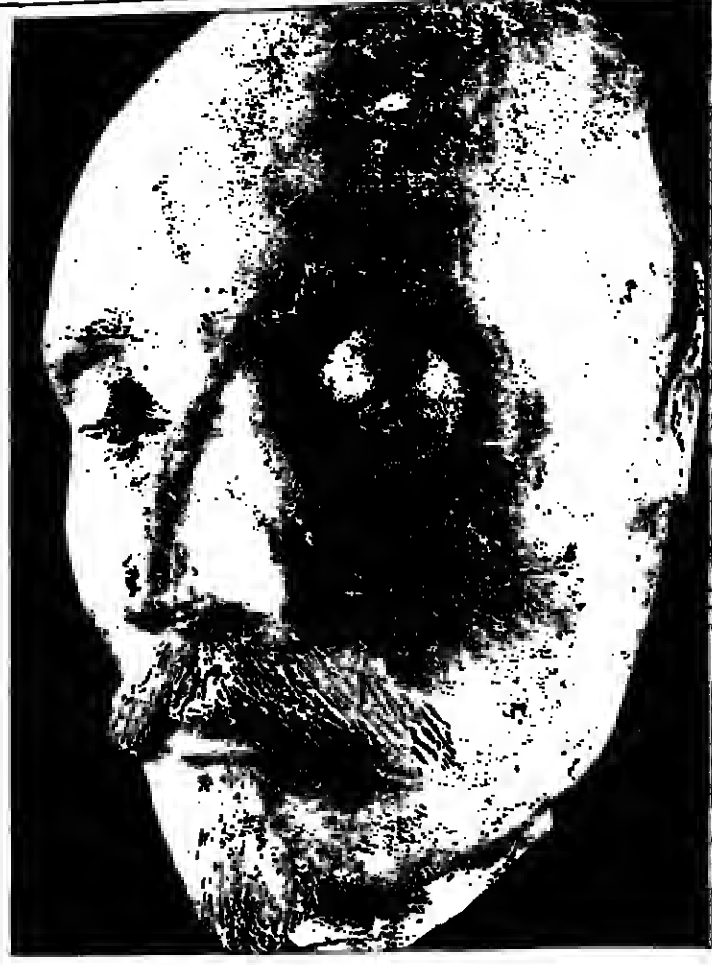
National Portrait Gallery in London. The portraits also show a slight swelling in the left eyelid, possibly caused by a rare cancer which affects the tear duct. "We did not have a single authentic image of Shakespeare but now, all of a sudden, we do have a true likeness of the bard," said Ms Hammerschmidt-Hummel.

However, the death mask has long been considered by many experts to be a fake. It was bought by a German who visited London in 1775.

The controversy surrounding Shakespeare's face is likely to continue for some time. Both of the portraits are of unknown provenance, and critics might argue they were based on the (fake) death mask.

Richard Proudfoot, professor of English at Kings College, London, said while Shakespeare died in April 1616, the interest in his biographical details did not begin for another 50 years.

"This whole area is fraught with danger. The Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington DC used to have scores of items reputedly carved from the mulberry tree in Shakespeare's garden. Someone pointed out that for them all to be genuine there would have to have been a whole forest in his garden – not just one tree."



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## Parents 'are washing hands' of 16-year-olds

By Glenda Cooper  
Social Affairs Correspondent

PARENTS feel that they can wash their hands of their children once they turn 16, challenging public policy assumptions that families will support teenage school-leavers.

A survey by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation into youth homelessness found that parents often see their children's 16th birthday as marking a watershed in their responsibilities.

Half of all parents thought it was reasonable to let a 16-year-old girl leave home rather than accept a boyfriend they objected to. And almost all agreed that a 16-year-old boy who clashed with his mother's new partner should be the one to leave home rather than the partner.

In-depth interviews with families living on local authority estates in Staffordshire, and young people who had become homeless found that there were often important differences in the background reasons for conflict.

In the past 20 years there has been a marked rise in the incidence of youth homelessness. Whereas in 1981 the typical single homeless person was still a male in his forties or older, by 1991 the Department of the Environment study found the majority of the single homeless were young people aged 25 and under.

Although parents are nearly always willing in principle to provide a home for older teenagers, many insist that it depends on acceptable behaviour and other conditions such as board and help with chores. Where conflict arose they thought it was acceptable for the children to leave home.

Young people who had grown up with the same parents

were most likely to have become homeless because of arguments over their behaviour. Nine out of ten young women said friction was caused by disputes over boyfriends; while parents described various failed attempts to control their daughters. Young men had to leave home after being caught stealing from their parents, or physical confrontation with their fathers.

But young people whose families had been disrupted by parents separating were most likely to have become homeless because they could not get on with the new partner, or the parent wanted to "make a new life" for themselves.

Of the 56 young homeless people who were interviewed, two in five said they had been physically or verbally abused, including a majority of those who came from broken homes. Just under one-third reported mental health problems and nearly one in six had attempted suicide.

"These findings have an important implications for the Government's 'New Deal' where young people over 16 will be required to take places in education, training or employment," said Joan Smith, of the Housing and Community Research Unit at Staffordshire University. "There is a clear disparity between policy assumptions that families will house older children and the way in which many parents take a more qualified view of their responsibilities."

"Better counselling and support services could help to prevent the kind of conflict that leads to homelessness among young people and ensure that those who do leave home receive better help."

■ *The Family Background of Young Homeless People*, is published by the Family Policy Studies Centre, 231 Baker Street, London NW1 6XE; price £9.95 (plus £1.50 p&p).

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# Those Budget leaks. Who should you believe?

Confused by all those Budget leaks in the weekend newspapers? Our Economics Editor, **Diane Coyle**, casts a cool eye over the predictions and spells out how the key Budget changes might really look.

## 'Brown to tax middle-class child benefit' (Sunday Times)

The Chancellor has long been itching to claw back some middle-class benefits to finance improved help for the low-paid, and child benefit is at the top of his list. The *Sunday Times* reports that he will use the £700m this would raise to increase the level of child benefit for the first-born by more than inflation, to sweeten the pill politically.

The catch is that many mothers have low pay or no pay and would not be liable for tax on the benefit in their own right. The Chancellor would need to get round the hurdle of independent taxation of husbands and wives in order to make a tax assessment based on family income. A return to joint taxation would mean a huge tax increase on working women and run into all kinds of obstacles such as how the Inland Revenue should treat cohabiting couples. It raises the awful spectre of tax inspectors in the bedroom. Could this *Sunday Times* story be a classic Treasury kite-flying exercise?

Mr Brown does, however, need to find around £1bn to finance what we know will be the symbolic centrepiece of his Budget, the Working Families Tax Credit and Childcare Credit. This replacement for Family Credit is meant to help low-income families by making sure work pays.

It will take the form of a tax credit in the pay packet, although there will be an option for the woman in the household to receive it directly even if she is not the main earner.

The new Childcare Credit for eligible families is intended to make up, in cash terms, for the loss of the single-parents benefit. But it will be available to couples with children as well. Pre-Budget hints suggest as

much as £1bn extra will be found for a more generous package of tax and childcare credits for those in low-paid jobs. The measures are likely to be timed to coincide with the introduction of a national minimum wage, to ensure the Government is not simply subsidising mean employers.

This week could see a timetable for the introduction of a 15p or 10p starting rate of income tax as another encouragement to work. A related Budget measure to boost job creation was signalled by Martin Taylor, head of the tax and benefits task force. Employers' national insurance contributions currently jump in big steps at various levels of income, discouraging jobs that pay sums just above these steps. Mr Taylor has recommended a big increase in the lower limit for employers' NICs, to be paid for by a small rise in their contributions for higher earners.

## 'Brown pledges £500m to NHS' (The Observer)

Even with public finances in healthy shape, thanks to higher tax revenues and tight control on government spending, Mr Brown will live up to his iron Chancellor image by refusing to take the brakes off expenditure. But the *Observer* says that he is widely expected to find more money for priority needs, health and education.

The NHS got an extra £300m to tide it over the winter, and both areas were allocated additional funds in last July's Budget. But the amounts the Chancellor can produce are still limited by his pledge to stick to his predecessor's spending totals for two years. Although these have frayed at the edges - thanks to New Deal spending financed from July's windfall tax on the privatised utilities, and a few extras paid for from the reserves - the broad outline will



Waiting for the budget: The Haylett family in Forest Hill, south London - Hytton and Helen and their children Abigail, George and Holly

Photograph: Andy Blackmore

still be unchanged. The results of the Government's fundamental review of spending are due in the summer. A mammoth battle for funds is likely then but the Chancellor has indicated that he will set firm spending totals for a further three years after that.

## 'Brown to set museums free' (Independent on Sunday)

Every Budget also has room for some important gestures that are nevertheless relatively cheap in the grand scheme of things. Up to £80m, partly financed

from National Lottery Funds, will allow Mr Brown to declare it a Budget for the Arts. The *Independent's* campaign has helped create a vocal pre-Budget lobby for the arts. The film industry got some help last July. In November it was pensioners who felt the benefit of the Chancellor's generosity.

Another beneficiary this week is expected to be hi-tech companies. One possible boost for entrepreneurs would allow investors to offset losses on shares in such companies against other tax due. Another possibility is the introduction of an allowance against corpora-

tio tax for research and development spending by certain types of business.

## 'Brown plans Budget to keep Britain on course for euro' (Sunday Telegraph)

As well as rehearsing the plans for extra money for health and education and following its own obsessive interest with the single European currency, the *Sunday Telegraph* focuses on measures to bring the British economy closer into line with its continental neighbours. The Budget does take place days before a key meeting of European

finance ministers in York. The *Telegraph* suggests that one strand of Euro policy is having a tough Budget that will help keep the pressure off the Bank of England to raise interest rates again, in the hope of getting the pound down to a more comfortable level.

Just as important will be structural measures like making the British housing market more like those in Germany and France, where owner-occupation rates and levels of mortgage debt are lower. In July Mr Brown announced a further restriction in the rate at which mortgage interest tax relief is

available to 10 per cent from 1 April 1998. He clearly means to get rid of it altogether. He could restrict it further or abolish it, saving the Treasury more than £2bn a year.

## 'Luxury company cars face tax hike' (Mail on Sunday)

The *Mail* says Mr Brown is likely to remove the £80,000 ceiling at which directors pay 35 per cent tax on Rolls-Royces, Bentleys and Aston Martins. The tax treatment of company cars has become steadily tougher since 1993, and users are now taxed on 35 per cent of the list price of the car, with reductions linked to business mileage and the age of the vehicle.

As an environmental measure, the mileage allowances are widely expected to be reduced or abolished.

The Budget will also confirm a pre-announced environmental measure, increases in petrol duty above inflation. In July the Chancellor raised vehicle excise duty by £5 to £150 for cars, but he could opt for a further rise. However, this looks like being one of the few green measures on tomorrow.

## What other measures will there be?

Individual Savings Accounts: Government proposals for the replacement for tax-free TESSAs and PEPs, which were set out in November, will be modified as a result of the uproar they caused in the financial-services industry.

A planned £50,000 lifetime limit on the amount that can be saved in an ISA will probably be scrapped, and rules for the amount transferable from PEPs and TESSAs could be eased. ISAs are due to come into force in April 1999.

Crackdown on tax avoidance: Clearly signalled in July, in the November Pre-Budget Report, and in a move just over a week ago to close a specific loophole relating to offshore trusts, there will be more anti-avoidance measures. Accountants are bracing themselves for scores or even hundreds of specific clauses, and perhaps also a general anti-avoidance proposal outlawing any transaction whose purpose is simply to avoid tax. For companies and the wealthy, this could be the big news tomorrow.

Company taxation: The Chancellor will introduce reforms to corporation tax pre-announced in November. Advance corporation tax is to be abolished, and big companies will move to a system of quarterly tax payments (rather than payment a year in arrears).

The rate of corporation tax is also to be reduced to 30 per cent, following a cut to 31 per cent in the July Budget.

In the long run the new system should encourage investment, but companies have complained that their cashflow will be hit by bringing forward their tax payments. Mr Brown might make some extra concessions to help small and medium-sized companies over this cashflow hurdle.

Pre-announced tax rises: In his first Budget last July Mr Brown announced the ending of income tax relief for private medical insurance; a further increase in real terms rises in tobacco duties; a higher rate of stamp duty on house sales above £250,000; and the phased withdrawal of tax relief for profit-related pay schemes.

Altogether, these add up to a pre-programmed tax increase of £3.6bn in 1998/99, equivalent to about 2p on the basic rate of income.

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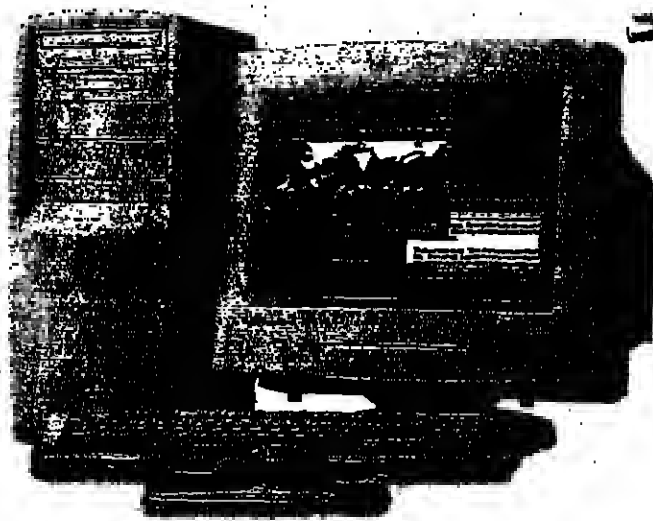
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## Commission rings changes in 'Agenda 2000'

THE gloves will come off in Brussels on Wednesday when the European Commission proposes the details of its "Agenda 2000" reforms to regional aid and farm spending. European Union governments are counting the cost of admitting five former Soviet bloc countries and Cyprus early in the next century. The rationale for the reforms is that to expand these high-speeding policies in their present form to the poor farm-dependent states of the east, would bankrupt the Union.

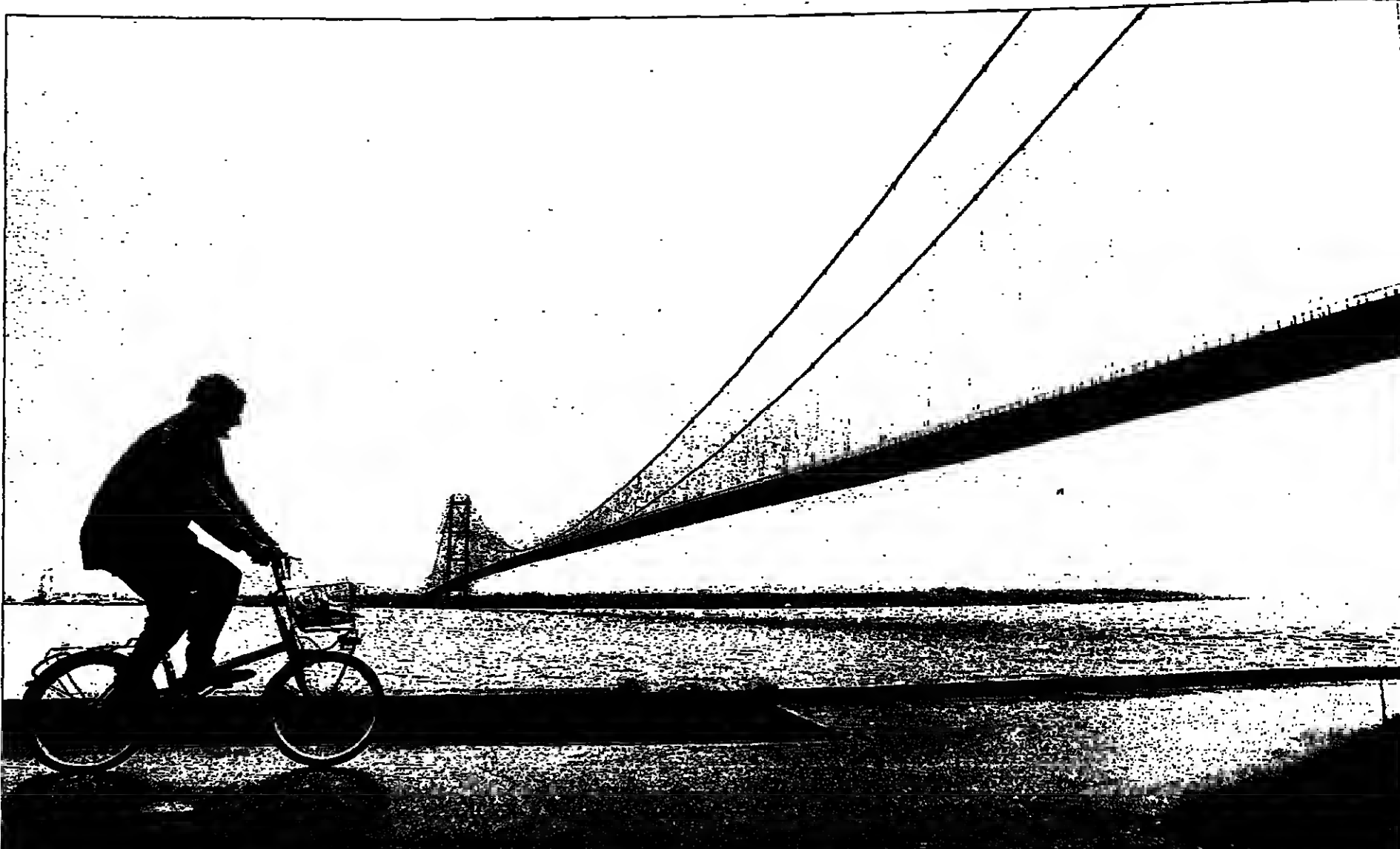
No government, least of all Britain, wants to increase its contributions to the budget so the Commission has to steer expansion without breaching the existing spending limit (1.27 per cent of member states' GNP). This is the context for expected cuts in aid to regions across Europe.

Aid will be cut in regions which are now rich enough to stand on their own feet and concentrated on those who are not. A four- to six-year transition for the losers is built in.

Britain's complaint is that UK regions will shoulder the

The EU's plans to take in new members mean that resources for regional aid will increasingly be channelled to the newer, poorer countries. The implications are serious and far-reaching, Katherine Butler explains

worst cuts because of the way poverty is measured. Government strategy is to warn that the cuts will wreck efforts to boost public support for Brussels. "This will harm perception of the EU at a critical time," said Arlene McCarthy, Labour spokesperson on regional policy in the European Parliament.



Deep in thought: A cyclist rides on a road beneath the Humber Bridge, near Hull, where The Deep, a £50m millennium scheme, is to receive partial EU backing

Photograph: Brian D

## Regions face £500m cut in EU aid

THE European Commission will unveil proposals this week clearing the way for cuts in European Union aid to British regions of up to £500m a year. The proposed shake-up will expose the worst strains yet between the Blair government and Brussels, with up to 70 per cent of eligible UK regions in danger of seeing their money slashed.

Behind-the-scenes lobbying has been intense, but the Government has so far failed to convince the Commission to drop plans it believes are framed to hit Britain hardest even though the UK is now the fourth poorest EU member state.

In Brussels, officials are dis-

mayed at the sums being pumped into millennium projects which are winning priority in terms of government support, over lower-profile job-creation schemes in depressed regions.

On Wednesday, Moolika Wulf-Mathies, the EU regional policy commissioner, will outline details of a radical shake-up to the regional aid budget which with farm spending absorbs three-quarters of the EU's £60bn spending each year.

Reform is being driven by plans to admit early next century of millions of poor central and east Europeans whose income per head is on average less than half the EU average.

Peter Mandelson, the Minister Without Portfolio, and Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, have been in Brussels to register the Government's protests.

But their negotiating strategy has been undermined both by Tony Blair's repeated claim that Britain has the best EU record on tackling unemployment, and the suspicion in Brussels that London is more interested in millennium projects than in shunting up "matching" investment for long-term regional development schemes part-financed by the EU.

Ms Wulf-Mathies claims the Government's attitude is co-

tradictory. On the one hand, Britain wants expansion to Eastern Europe, but at the same time is not willing to dig deeper to pay for it. "The biggest outcry has been in Britain, but the arguments we are getting are not very convincing," said an aide.

Britain has been receiving £1.5bn a year since 1994, but that will run out in 1999. Under Ms Wulf-Mathies' proposals Northern Ireland and the Scottish Highlands and Islands would lose the priority claim to aid they enjoy now, while nine of 13 regions in industrial decline could see their funding halved and axed. Merseyside is expected to retain top rates of aid and South

Yorkshire, where wealth per head has fallen to about 75 per cent of the EU average, may win an increased share.

But overall the regions claim they will be shouldering the brunt of the cost of EU enlargement because unemployment will be used as the yardstick and the jobless rates in Britain have fallen since the EU aid cake was last divided up.

Meanwhile, east Germany and parts of Italy will see their funding increased because the new drive is to "concentrate" available cash on areas which need it most. The Commission believes aid is spread too thinly under the present system.

The Commission's directorate for regional policy has also written to the Government to express concern that the focus on millennium projects could distort the economic regeneration strategy which EU money is supporting.

"The Deep", a £50m millennium scheme in Hull, will be given partial EU backing because the Commission accepts it could promote tourism, but others have been rejected.

"Local regeneration seems to be the last priority when it comes to securing matching funds, but there is plenty of money floating around for the millennium," said one EU source.

### EU aid may be stripped bare

A SEQUEL to the Full Monty might find Robert Carlyle and his Sheffield mates on a coach to Brussels to protest about the threat to jobs in a new EU financed enterprise park.

Hit by pit closures and the decline of heavy engineering South Yorkshire has sunk into poverty worse than parts of Greece, Spain or east Germany and is lobbying to win for the first time the highest possible EU grant aid rates. But other parts of Yorkshire, and neighbouring Humberside are at serious risk of being barred from even the lower aid category. Losing this classification would probably halve funding although cuts could be as high as £70 million a year.

"We are alarmed, frankly I

think it's going to be disastrous," says Robin Smail, director of the Yorkshire region's Brussels office. Income per head is 12 per cent below the EU average but this will count for nothing. Unemployment will be used to measure a region's prosperity and on paper, rates in Yorkshire and Humberside look a lot better than in say the coalfields of southern Belgium.

Yes thousands who lost jobs have left the workforce for good and because they have given up seeking work are not counted. And many new jobs are low paid, or what economists call "peripheral". The figures therefore tell nothing of the depression and the depth of the structural problems which persist, says Robin Smail.

### Deal on Cyprus clears the way for talks on EU expansion

Patching together a deal on how to embark on accession negotiations with the divided island of Cyprus, the EU has cleared the way for an 00-schedule start to enlargement talks with all six "first-wave" candidate members on 31 March.

The deal by foreign ministers at a weekend of informal talks steers a middle course between extremes - Greece's stance that unless talks with the internationally recognised Greek Cypriot government went ahead without contest, it would

block the entire enlargement process; and France's proposal that discussions with Cyprus should be put on ice until its Greek and Turkish communities there settled their differences.

In the meantime, the EU hopes two things will happen:

that the Cyprus delegation contains Turkish Cypriots; and that the overall settlement which has eluded UN negotiators since the Turkish invasion of the southern half of the island in 1974 can be achieved. Neither looks likely. —Rupert Cornwell, Edinburgh

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# Clinton wilts in court of public opinion

Last night's television interview with Kathleen Willey was the latest and perhaps most damaging component in the steady accumulation of sex allegations against President Bill Clinton.

He is accused of making unwanted advances to a woman who had come to him in personal distress to ask for a paying job, a charge he strongly denies.

But an almost equally damaging claim is made by this week's edition of *Newsweek* magazine, which accuses him of arranging for one of his Democratic party allies, Nathan Landow, to put pressure on Ms Willey not to make her accusation public.

In reasoning that seems familiar from other alleged Clinton sex cases, Mr Landow is quoted as telling her that if she says "nothing happened", she cannot be contradicted.

So far as public opinion is concerned, it is Ms Willey's personal testimony that will probably count for the most. She appears a credible witness, more credible than the others and more of a victim.

So far as the law goes, it is probably the claims that he, or his allies or subordinates, exerted pressure on his accusers.

Mr Clinton is currently being judged in two courts at once: the court of law and the court of public opinion.

In the judicial court, he is currently involved in two cases.

Latest sex claim may induce people to make links that the law cannot do, writes Mary Dejevsky in Washington

There is Paula Jones's civil suit for sexual harassment, relating to an incident in 1991 when he was Arkansas state governor and she was a government employee.

And there is a criminal investigation, part of which claims that he had an affair with a young White House trainee, Monica Lewinsky, and induced her to lie about it.

As yet, Mr Clinton's defence in both cases has held up well, assisted by a domestic media operation that was so pummelled by (White House) accusations of irresponsibility and inaccuracy early on that it has played safe ever since.

Whatever happened in the Arkansas hotel room or with Ms Lewinsky in the White House, no third-party evidence seems yet to have emerged to corroborate the charges.

It is a "she said-he said" scenario that, lawyers say, would make it hard to find Mr Clinton liable.

For all the pages of testimony made public by Ms Jones's lawyers on Friday, it still seems contestable whether Ms Jones has a case for sexual harassment, either in terms of what did or did not happen to her in the hotel room or in terms of whether her career was damaged.

Ms Willey, on the other hand, might have such a case - but she is not suing and for a while her career seemed to prosper.

While it may not help Ms Jones in a court of law, however, the "pats-on-the-head" that her lawyers have sought to prove could have a significant impact on public opinion.

And Ms Willey's graphic television interview could help to bring the other women's experiences to life in a way that even the printed verbatim of their legal testimony did not do.

Whether they were willing

ly involved with Mr Clinton or not, all the women cited - from his self-confessed mistress, Gennifer Flowers, through to Monica Lewinsky - seem to have been encouraged to keep silent.

In law, the individual cases are steadfastly refusing to mesh to the benefit of Mr Clinton's accusers.

There may be evidence of pressure being exerted in Ms Willey's case, but not in Ms Lewinsky's, which is the one under investigation.

Public opinion, however, is liable to make connections that the law cannot do.

The fact that Mr Clinton's approval ratings are now starting to fall, suggests that the avalanche of evidence that has come out this weekend could precipitate an even steeper slide.



Claim and counter-claim: Kathleen Willey, whose television interview last night was the latest contribution to the accumulation of allegations against President Bill Clinton

## A rollercoaster ride to the White House

KATHLEEN WILLEY was a handsome 46 and married when she approached President Clinton for a paying job in the White House in November 1993, writes Mary Dejevsky.

She was already in the White House, working three days a week as a volunteer. But family debts had run out of control, her marriage was in trouble and she needed a salary.

Until they fell on hard times, she and her husband - a town planning lawyer - had been leading members of the Democratic Party in the state of Virginia and had energetically raised funds for the Clinton campaign, travelling to Little Rock, Arkansas, for election night in 1992.

Before her marriage, Ms Willey had worked in clerical jobs and as an air hostess with TWA. Marriage had brought money, a life of considerable comfort and two children. It was said she had given

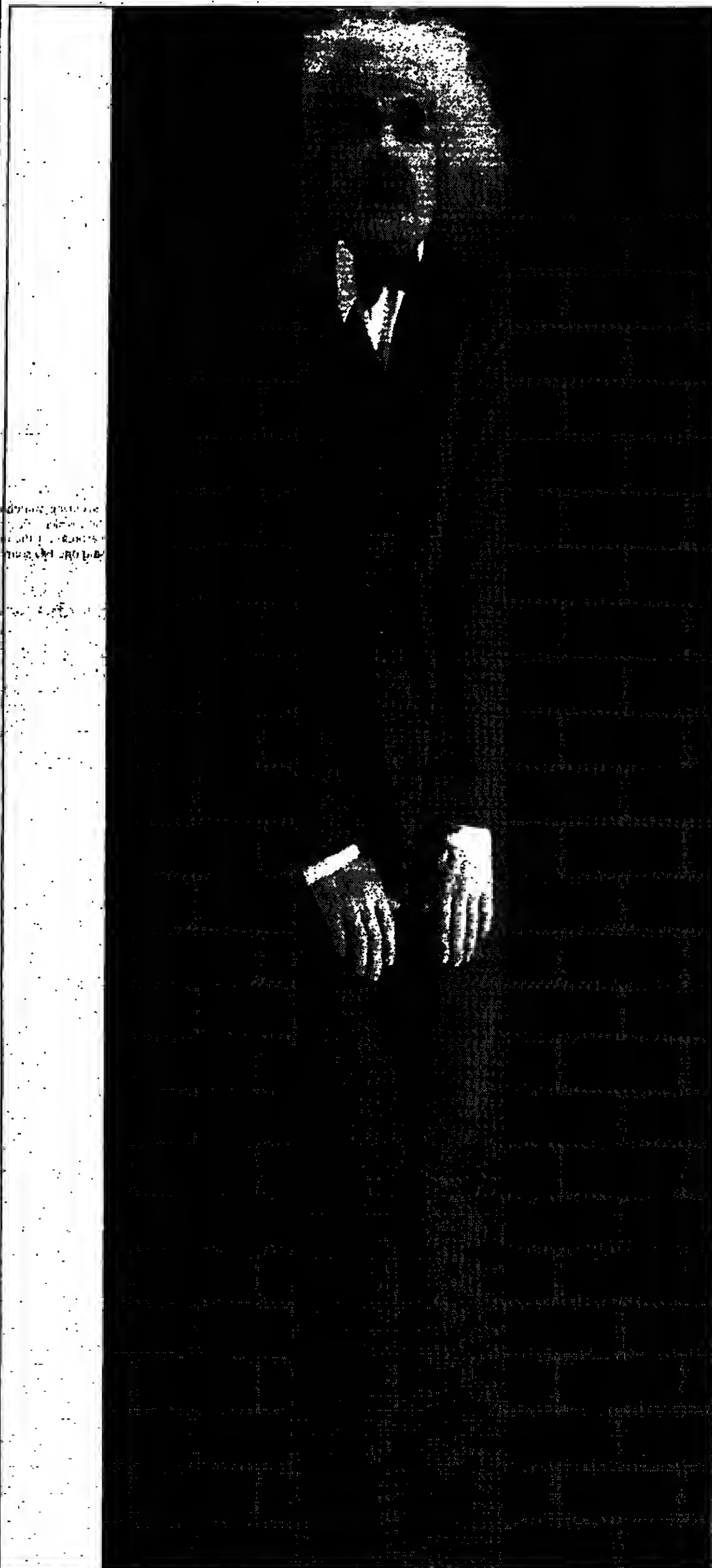
her a taste for proximity to power; she was described as having "a fascination with the President".

Whatever happened when she went to see Mr Clinton in the Oval Office, Kathleen Willey's career thereafter took a sharp turn for the better. She received a salaried job, was included in two delegations to international conferences at White House expense, and joined a list of the great and the good on the board of a military service organisation.

Her personal life, though, was not so successful. She had returned from her encounter with Mr Clinton to find that her debt-burdened husband had committed suicide.

When her White House job came to an end she continued to be plagued by money difficulties.

She was living quietly near her home town of Richmond, Virginia, until called to testify in the Paula Jones case last year.



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# Slick old fox set for comeback in Armenia poll

By Phil Reeves  
Yerevan, Armenia

Were it only a matter of looks, the man on stage could easily have stepped off a campaign bus in San Francisco. Glossy-jowled, with a Clinton haircut and a silver tongue, he is as tailored for the consumer as a Parker pen.

The 3,000 electors stuffed in the hall are lapping up every syllable. He moves smoothly from family man to elder statesman, from pal to president. Speech complete, he glides out into square outside, where he hands snowdrops to the women in the crowd before driving off in a Volvo in search of more votes.

Karen Demirchian is as slick a stump performer as you are likely to find and yet his CV owes about as much to the democratic process as Noah (who wound up on top of nearby Mt Ararat) did to the electric drill.

For 14 years Mr Demirchian was Armenia's first secretary of the Communist Party until Mikhail Gorbachev kicked him out in 1988. His skill at pumping money out of his friends in Moscow is reflected in some of Yerevan's most grandiose buildings. Now, after 10 years in obscurity, he is back. And, at 65, he wants to run the place again.

The world's strategy-makers will be watching this pocket of the Trans-Caucasus as it goes to the polls today for the first round of its presidential elections. The second round, a two-man race, is expected on 30 March. Bound up with the outcome are some of the West's most pressing geopolitical interests, including Caspian oil.

Mr Demirchian's reputation is that of a party hack who surrounded himself with cronies and ruled a republic awash

with corruption. He is vague on policy, especially about Nagorno Karabakh, the cause of a war with Azerbaijan which cost 25,000 lives. But he says he wants to strengthen ties with Moscow if elected. The size of his crowds and the polls suggest he might be. Western diplomats are not keen. "Stagnation," replies one when asked what the future would hold.

Yet in the few weeks since his reappearance Mr Demirchian's ratings have shot skywards, largely through popular nostalgia. Life has not been easy for



Karen Demirchian: Giving away snowdrops

Armenia. Unemployment is 45 per cent; borders with Turkey and Azerbaijan are closed because of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. The days when people had to rip down trees for fuel are past. But so have the days when Armenia was among the Soviet Union's most prosperous republics. So, too, have plaudits from the West for pushing ahead with reform and democracy.

The 1996 election which returned Levon Ter Petrosian to power was so rigged that 40,000 people took to the streets in protest. Yet Armenia's future course remains of critical in-

terest in the West, especially the US. Anxious to limit the influence of Moscow and Tehran over the republic, Washington has been pouring in cash.

Armenia's borders are a few miles from the planned route of a pipeline through Georgia along which most Caspian oil will eventually be piped from Azerbaijan to the West. If Yerevan tilts still further to Moscow under Mr Demirchian, the oil will flow through territory sandwiched perilously between Russia and an even more pro-Russian Armenia. It is a far from stable arrangement: Georgia's president, Eduard Shevardnadze, has twice been the subject of assassination bids.

Although it would never admit it, the US would rather see a victory by Robert Kocharyan, one of three front-runners in today's poll. The Prime Minister, took charge after Mr Ter Petrosian resigned last month, the victim of outrage over his willingness to make concessions on Nagorno Karabakh. No matter that Mr Kocharyan is from Nagorno Karabakh, and seems unlikely to do much to unravel that tragedy. He is generally pro-Western. He also has the support of the security forces and Defence Ministry and the Armenian diaspora.

Worries about Mr Demirchian may prove overblown. Two elderly neighbours - Gaidar Aliyev in Azerbaijan and Mr Shevardnadze - are of the same pedigree. Yet they have found favour in the West, helped by the bouquet of oil. But it will be a strange twist. The Caucasus will be dominated by three wily old ex-Communist hacks who served under Brezhnev. Who, in the euphoria of Soviet collapse, can have expected that?



Scorched earth policy: The Brazilian government has done little to save the rainforest, which is disappearing fast in the state of Roraima. Photograph: AP

## Bureaucrats fan the flames of Amazonia

By Phil Davison  
Latin America Correspondent

OFFICIALS in the remote Brazilian Amazon jungle state of Roraima, ravaged by wildfires for the past two months, are angry over what they say is a slow response from the federal government in Brasilia.

They say the government has been holding back promised funds for firefighting helicopters and other measures to halt the blaze, which has already charred 22,000 square miles, a quarter of the state's forests. The fires, following the area's worst drought in 30 years, are threatening 15 villages inhabited by hundreds of Yanomami Indians, the world's last surviving Stone Age tribe. The blaze has already wiped out one-third of



the state's crops and burnt alive 12,000 cows.

"We want the federal government to release the funds we need to control these fires," Roraima state spokeswoman Consuelo Oliveira told the Associated Press. "So far we haven't seen a penny."

Many Brazilians were al-

ready critical of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso over an environment bill passed by Congress last month. The bill imposed strict penalties for several ecological crimes, but after lobbying by wealthy logging companies, Mr Cardoso diluted the bill by vetoing nine articles. One would have hand-

ed down three-year prison terms on farmers or loggers who cut or burnt forest areas without permission.

The government is due to announce a new "Green Package" this week, offering farmers incentives to discourage them from the traditional "slash and burn" technique of

burning down trees to create farmland.

After delaying statistics for many months, Mr Cardoso's government finally admitted in January that deforestation of Amazonia had reached record levels over the past two years, doubling between 1994 and 1995 alone. One-eighth of Brazil's rainforests has been destroyed, by farmers or loggers chopping down trees for lumber or burning them to create cattle pastures or farmland, over the past 20 years.

Roraima state governor Neudo Campos has visited the federal capital, Brasilia, three times over the past two months in an effort to get federal aid, particularly a promised \$2.4m (£1.5m) for 22 specially-converted firefighting helicopters from the US and Russia.

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صكرا من الالاهل







# THE INDEPENDENT

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## Trust Labour's old cultural ideals

THE AMBIVALENT British attitude towards culture is summed up in the new name for the ministry which does those bits of government that do not fit in more familiar departments. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport started life as that of National Heritage, as if the only culture which mattered was inherited from the dead.

Such is our suspicion, though, of Ministries of Culture, a foreign concept like Ministries of Justice or the Interior, that Chris Smith had to tack on two other words to soften the impact.

In popular perception there are only two kinds of culture, high and low, and the Government's involvement in either of them is deeply suspect. First, there is high culture, which is oil paintings and opera, where the role of government is to tax honest, hard-working folk of modest means in order to subsidise the pleasures of toffs. Then there is low culture, which is sport and pop music, where the role of government is to have its senior members pose for the cameras in the company of the currently fashionable stars in the hope that this will attract votes – a ploy which has a tendency to backfire.

Tony Blair should have known New Labour's New Luvvies would turn on him as soon as they had emptied the Downing Street cellars, just as John Prescott should have expected his street cred to be doused with a bucket of cold water. Rock musicians are not supposed to approve of politicians; just as you would not ask a politician to compose rebellious music.

Yesterday's hint that Gordon Brown will act to ensure free entry to the great national museums and art galleries is a much more substantial gesture, not because it is "high" rather than "low" culture, but because it suggests an appreciation of culture which is deep rather than shallow.

The Independent and The Independent on Sunday have campaigned for free entry because we see the country's great cultural institutions as part of our communal life, our public space, offering everyone the chance to discover things they might not choose to pay for.

We are pleased to see that this ideal still has some hold on our national leaders. It seems that, in their drive to modernise socialism, they have not in fact forgotten its early values. Many of its 19th-century thinkers, from the early Marx to William Morris, spoke about art as the form of work by which people could be ennobled and uplifted.

This should be the response both to left-wing philistinism, which sees culture as an elite activity, and to liberal scepticism, which associates a ministry of culture with state propaganda. We have to reclaim inclusiveness, seeing culture as the description of a fuller life for everyone, and reclaim a liberating role for the state.

Philosophically, the answer to the philistines is in Mr Blair's own constitution for his party, the new Clause IV, which declares that "by the strength of our common endeavour, we achieve more than we achieve alone": a public library is testimony to a stronger society than a private one, just as a free school, museum or art gallery is. It creates "for each of us the means to realise our true potential" which creates "for all of us a community".

But this should be the start, not the end, of debate. We welcome Gerry Robinson's decision to sack all the members of the Arts Council. There can be no going back to the period when fossilised art galleries and musty museums found themselves overtaken by television, when bleating for hand-outs stifled creative energies. There is more than a hint of this in the whingeing of Oasis's manager that such great talent could never have flowered if the hand had not been allowed to do whatever it liked on the dole for as many years as it pleased.

But let us have an open argument about the boundaries. If the Science Museum and the Natural History Museum should be free, why should we pay £17.50 for the Millennium Experience?

Mr Blair's emphasis on unleashing the creative talent of the British people is absolutely right. These cultural skills increasingly drive the nation's economy. Labour politicians ought to be seen more with artists, popular scientists, writers, computer software designers, architects and commercial directors – instead of consorting with the shallow cult of football. On the eve of a "Budget for women and children" the Chancellor sent a strange signal by endorsing the New Lad culture, watching Tottenham Hotspur from the directors' box at White Hart Lane.

Let the Government promote an inclusive notion of culture, high and low, and use that to convince us that it is not simply concerned with surface perceptions but a deeper, fuller life for all.

## At last, a minister who answers the question

SOMETIMES it takes a quiet Sunday to reveal the slow trends in public life which are lost in the weekday hurly-burly. One such feature is the continuing rise of Jack Straw. There are not many ministers of this people's government who are prepared to be accountable to the people through the form of open-ended interviews on radio or television. Since the election, broadcasters have repeatedly intoned that no minister was available to defend what ministers had collectively decided (the rise in prescription charges was the most important recent occasion). But yesterday the Home Secretary went on the BBC's *The World This Weekend* to say why he didn't think judges should set sentences for murderers, why he had released Roisin McAiskey and why he didn't think legalising cannabis was a good idea. In each case he took detailed issue with the forceful arguments of his many critics, answering questions rather than using them as prompts for passages of pre-prepared press releases. Whether or not listeners agreed with him, the contrast with the halting word-processed prose of too many of his colleagues was deafening.

I FEEL sorry for estate agents. For one thing, nobody has ever bothered to feature them in a major novel. But today all that is changed. Yes, today I bring you a major new work of fiction about an estate agent! Not only that, but it is an interactive novel. This means that you, the reader, have the power to change the course of the story by choosing the right option at various moments. Understand? Well, you will, as soon as you get into this complete novel about estate agents, entitled...

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Oops – I'm sorry – we seem to have run out of space. You're on your own now! Good luck! Hope you get out alive!

## PICTURE OF THE DAY



Hopscotch: children at play in the village of Hoi An, Vietnam

Photograph: Rob Stratton

## LETTERS

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number  
Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

### Plutonium perils

TODAY (16 March) is the final day for submissions to the UK Environment Agency in response to the application by British Nuclear Fuels (BNFL) to commission the Sellafield MOX Plant in west Cumbria.

A fierce debate is going on between the proponents and detractors of this process, which mixes plutonium oxide extracted in nuclear reprocessing plants with uranium oxide and binds them in ceramic pellet form for burning in thermal reactors.

BNFL has run an imaginative PR campaign about turning burnt matches into fuel for future generations. But the target audience didn't understand it.

The industry sees MOX as a means of returning plutonium to the contracting utilities in a safe and uncontroversial form and a lifeline to cling to until international opinion swings back in their favour and they are called upon to build the next generation of nuclear power plants, and ultimately the fast breeder.

BNFL was permitted to build the Sellafield MOX plant before the last government had arrived at any policy on the merits, or otherwise, of mixed oxide fuel fabrication, increased transportation of radioactive materials, potential proliferation concerns (by blurring the distinction between civil and military end use) and spent MOX fuel management.

This Government must not repeat the mistakes of its predecessors. It must "call-in" BNFL's application to commission the Sellafield MOX Plant. It must consider, in an open and transparent manner, the case for a public inquiry where all the issues can be thoroughly investigated in the context of the sustainable society this government is committed to delivering.

PATRICIA BIRNIE, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, USA; SARAH BURTON, Greenpeace; MARTIN FORWOOD, Cumbrians Opposed to a Radioactive Environment; PAD GREEN, Friends of the Earth; MARTIN KALINOWSKI, International Network of Engineers and Scientists against Proliferation, Germany; DAVE KNIGHT.

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament; XANTHE HALL, International Physicians for the Prevention of War, Germany; MARTIN HEMMINGWAY, Nuclear-Free Local Authorities; ARJUN MAKHUANI, Institute for Energy and Environmental Research, Washington DC; MICHAEL MARIOTTE, Nuclear Information and Resources Service, Washington DC; KRISTEN OSTLING, Campaign for Nuclear Phaseout, Canada; PAUL LEVENTHAL, Nuclear Control Institute, Washington DC; THOMAS SMITH, Environmental Society, Imperial College London; GRACE THORP, National Environmental Coalition of Native Americans, US; DR LAZ WATERSON, Nuclear Strategy Group Medact; JOHN WATSON, Socialist Environment and Resources Association, Penrith, Cumbria

### Diana and charities

THE DEATH of Diana, Princess of Wales, has undoubtedly raised awareness of the importance of donating to charity, but the overall impact on the level of public donations has not been as dramatic as supposed ("Diana's death aids charities", 11 March).

Research by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and NOP indicates that around three million people gave to charity in response to the Princess's death, and that about a third of these individuals were encouraged to give solely because of the tragedy. Interestingly, these last appear to come from social classes C, D and E, and as such are typical of those who give to charity on a regular basis.

It could, therefore, be argued that the Princess's death has encouraged a whole new group of people to give to charity. But even if this is the case, the long-term impact on the

level of charitable donations is unlikely to be significant.

The public has donated around £13m to the Diana fund to date. While this is a substantial figure, it represents only slightly more than the public donates to the voluntary sector each day of the year. In reality, donations to charity fell by 20 per cent between 1993 and 1996, from £5.3bn to £4.58bn.

It is therefore encouraging that the trustees are committed to consulting with charities and voluntary organisations to ensure that, in the longer term, as wide a range of causes as possible are able to benefit from the new fund. The charity sector has had a difficult time of it in recent years, and any new funds that are generated will be very welcome. STUART ETHERINGTON, Chief Executive, The National Council for Voluntary Organisations, London N1

### Prescott 'smears'

I WOULD like to respond to your paper's prominent coverage of criticism of *The Sunday Times* by John Prescott. You quote Mr Prescott as saying we were trying to smear him and "rubbishing in the gutter" ("Prescott rages at *Sunday Times*", *Independent on Sunday*, 15 March).

The facts tell a different story. We put a journalist, Simon Trump, into Mr Prescott's Hull constituency in 1996 because of rumours of political fighting and to find out at grassroots what was going on. We used subterfuge (the reporter did not reveal he was a journalist) precisely because we wanted to get at the truth. Mr Trump was a passive observer at meetings over a period of months and did not act as an agent provocateur. In the event little of interest emerged and no story was written by Mr Trump when the investigation ended over a year ago. If it had been

an attempt to smear Mr Prescott, a less scrupulous paper would have tried harder to find something pejorative.

I am happy to defend subterfuge as a crucial journalistic tool. Many stories, including "cash for questions", would not have been written without it. They were published because they were in the public interest, and the subterfuge was revealed to readers.

As for the two recent stories by *The Sunday Times* about Mr Prescott, one was about a row in Hull which had already appeared in a local paper. Why should we not cover a vicious public argument involving the Deputy Prime Minister's son? The other was the non-declaration by Mr Prescott of a large donation. That is now being investigated by Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards.

Two legitimate reports hardly amount to a "vendetta". Mr Prescott was happy in opposition to use our stories about Tory sleaze and foreign funding of the Conservative Party for political advantage. Now in government he seems unwilling to accept the inevitable scrutiny that comes with being such a powerful politician. JOHN WITHEROW, Editor, *The Sunday Times*, London E1

### Too long a life?

EVERY day we are urged in the press and television to forgo small pleasures – smoking, drinking, eating beef – in the hope that we may live a little longer. Every day I go to visit my husband in a nursing home, where the residents are dying slowly of old age "sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything". Is it really worth it? SHEILA D HAYDEN, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands

### Understanding art

JASON REESE (letter, 11 March) misses the point of David Rodway's justified complaint, in relation to *The Angel of the North*, about the amateurism of art criticism (letter, 9 March).

That the public or officialdom takes an interest in art doesn't mean it understands it – look at the derision once heaped on Impressionism and Modernism, and praise for mawkish and moribund Salon works. Nor is the unfashionable claim that art needs special knowledge about perception and creativity necessarily anti-democratic and a denial of art's capacity to embrace the interests of the ordinary person. Real democracy consists not in a phantasmic free-for-all, but in providing the education and culture to equip all with the skills in perception, reasoning and philosophy for assessing the assertions of experts – skills as vital in art as the rest of life.

The supposition that artistic meaning and quality speak directly or transparently, without mediation, is common yet naive. If engineers don't entrust evaluation of the reliability or functional properties of their structures to the uninformed, why should art be any different? RICKY HANDS, London SE27

### Merchant of modernity

NO PLAY could be less politically incorrect than *The Merchant of Venice* ("Teachers defend Shakespeare's 'anti-Semitic' play", 14 March). With amazing prescience of modern trendy worries Shakespeare tackles not only anti-Semitism but also sexism (Portia and her maid beat the men hands down) and colour prejudice (of the rejected suitors the noble Ethiopian is the one Portia fancies).

Indeed if you think (as I do) that the love Antonio bears for Bassanio has a homosexual element; the play tackles "gay issues" too, in that justice in the end decrees that Antonio should not bleed for his love.

Very suitable for today's classrooms. TONY RIDGE, York

## All the thrills, glamour and heroism of an agent's life (an estate agent, that is)



MILES KINGDON

I FEEL sorry for estate agents. For one thing, nobody has ever bothered to feature them in a major novel. But today all that is changed. Yes, today I bring you a major new work of fiction about an estate agent! Not only that, but it is an interactive novel. This means that you, the reader, have the power to change the course of the story by choosing the right option at various moments. Understand? Well, you will, as soon as you get into this complete novel about estate agents, entitled...

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صلى الله عليه وسلم



## Big Government is coming back, thanks to the little kids



DAVID WALKER

Will mums learn to love Labour if it gives them a Kindergarten on every corner?

IS TOMORROW'S much-trailed "Budget for children and families" necessarily going to be a budget for Big Government? Perish the thought, Gordon Brown will say. Look at the aggregates for public spending. His Tory totals mean that the ratio of spending to national product currently seems to be in free fall - these hardly look like signs of Nordic extravagance. No one is proffering a state-supported crèche in every street.

Not yet, perhaps, but community Kindergarten are on their way. Behind the tax adjustments affecting women and children some ambitious rethinking about children has been taking place. It's only a matter of plans, proposals, seminar papers and projections at this stage. They may never come to fruition. But behind them something important has already happened. It's a rapprochement between Labour and the idea of government.

It's not the kind of thing you hear Alastair Campbell giving briefings about; it may not even be something ministers are aware of. But - on policy for children, at least - New Labour is coming out ... As what Old Labour always was, the party of the state, the muscular, interventionist, big-spending state.

Climatically speaking, during the past twelve months we have moved a long way. Even in its pallid, Majorite form, last March Thatcherism was still identifying government as the problem, the inhibitor, the agent of national decline. New Labour was at first pragmatic and sceptical about government size and capacity. Now, as Brownism starts to define this administration's purposes, the state becomes the little train that can.

For me a moment of epiphany came the other day at the concluding public session of the Cross Departmental Review on Provision for Young Children. On the face of it, this is just another review exercise, one of the scores supposedly coming to fruition this spring; it was distinctive in that it was being led by officials from the Treasury who went around assuring everyone it was not just another cuts exercise.

But the review not yet over, one conclusion is obvious. Ministers are convinced that "early intervention" in children's lives secures major benefits later, for them and for society at large. Whether marshalled by criminologists, doctors or social workers the empirical evidence consistently says: nursery schools, intensive programmes for young mothers (starting before birth), kids' clubs - they work. What that means in turn is that government will have to go to work ... nobody else, no mystical civil society, no free market is going to provide. Ministers who have spent most of their careers in Opposition apologising for government action suddenly find themselves on firm ground in advocating more of it.

Whatever Gordon Brown delivers tomorrow in terms of tax credits for child care,

the Budget is only the first shot in a new battery of child-centred policies. For example, if the Treasury is to subsidise women to buy care, education, health and social security are going to take a very keen interest in what kind of care, provided by whom, in whose premises and when. Down that road, sooner or later, you get to the state itself providing care. Practically that means a programme of state-provided "education-rich" care for pre-school children.

But no, ministers will say, we have learned the lessons of our collectivist past. We believe in splitting customers and contractors, purchasers and providers: the state may will some social end without getting into the business of employing care workers, or teachers. There will be talk about "empowerment". Ministers will praise the voluntary sector and imply that a hundred flowers will bloom as volunteers are drafted or bribed into providing crèches and clubs. But in the final analysis, the state will be there, as funder and, in many cases, direct provider. In Britain, of course, it is considered rather bad form to talk about "the state" in this way. Locally it looks like councils, quangos, the National Health Service - diverse and disaggregated. But collectively, compulsory provision it remains.

Is this socialism - is Labour reverting to historical type and substituting tax-financed public sector activity for the free choices of individuals and families? It's striking, isn't it, how tired that Tory rhetoric now sounds. Also how irrelevant. In its emerging policies for children - Gordon Brown would be well advised to leave the touchy-feely stuff about "family" to his next door neighbour - Labour is the party of practical collectivism.

One of the real reasons why Big Government was so unloved in its earlier incarnations was that it is, in cause and in effect, redistributionist. It uses richer people's money to spend on staff and projects which benefit the poorer. In run-down estates the voluntary sector can't do child care with education. As women move into employment they will need somewhere to leave their kids. If child-minding alone won't do those kids any good, government will have to supply the where-withal, the premises, the trained workers, the will to get the clubs up and running. Redistribution, here we come.

Is there a political will for it? Probably not. Yet Labour might manage if it bundled income and jobs redistribution with what looks on the surface like gender redistribution. Will women at large give them cover?

Women want child care; preferably they do not want to pay for it directly; most would prefer the care of very young children to involve some effort to stimulate their minds, bodies and imaginations. One of the great current questions of politics has to be whether mothers are prepared to put their political choices where they say their interests lie.

For there is little historical doubt that Big Government and the emancipation of women from domestic servitude have done hand in hand. For all his goat-like tendencies a father of feminism was David Lloyd George (who recruited women in large numbers to make munitions in the First World War); another was Harold Wilson, who expanded the public services and with them a huge raft of women-friendly jobs.

Old Labour can hardly have been said to have benefited politically from the association. Even if now, as the polls suggest, New Labour wins the younger female plaudits, it is hard to see clear gender-based lines offering reliable electoral support. Older generations of marxist and socialist women sometimes entertained warm thoughts about the state, but younger movers and shakers of the Natasha Walters and Kate Figs stamp seem distinctly ambiguous. Can Labour persuade them Big Government is worth it, for the children's sake?

## In dealing with China, mistrust is the better part of diplomacy

Jonathan Mirsky, formerly of *The Times*, says the softly, softly approach does not impress the Peking regime



The US rolled out the red carpet for Jiang Zemin. Without Mr Wei's release he would not have been so welcome

CHINA'S next premier, Zhu Rongji, the Politburo member who threatens to behead bankers who ignore his edicts, will visit Britain next month. As Theresa Poole reports today, the details of his life are sketchy. Yet his country has the Earth's largest population, one of its biggest economies, a sizeable army and global ambitions. Such a country requires constant, minute analysis.

But only bare statistics are available. Secrecy extends to the correct date for the founding of the Communist Party, how many millions died because of Mao's economic fantasies during history's worst-ever famine between 1959 and 1961, or how many demonstrators were killed during Tiananmen. Foreigners who seek information on these matters are regarded in Peking as "unfriendly" or "anti-China".

The questions must be asked. Zhu Rongji's flacks have persuaded many Westerners that he is an economic genius. Perhaps. What are the facts of Mr Zhu's life - was he in detention for 20 years during the Maoist era; can a man bred in a command society champion a market economy?

At the very least, British people need to understand how their officials deal with Chinese affairs. It is not an encouraging story. Last week, when China's most famous dissident, Wei Jingsheng, met Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary showed Mr Wei a list of 10 political prisoners. He hoped European Union countries could ask Peking about their circumstances. Did Mr Wei know anything about them? Well, yes. He had been released in mid-November, but his name was still on the list.

How seriously can the British Government take human rights in China, if it can't keep lists of political prisoners up to date? And accurate. In 1991 there were over 200 names on the list. It is not that prisoners have been released, like the fortunate Mr Wei. International pressure on Peking, never great, has lessened.

This week in Geneva, Mr Cook and Mr Blair participated in the EU decision not to permit any resolutions criticising Peking's human rights record. They claim that with the Chinese "quiet diplomacy" rather than confrontation "gets results". Their examples are the release of Mr Wei and the upcoming visit of the UN's Mary Robinson to Peking.

But what will she discover? Her visit is likely to resemble the recent trip to China by the Catholic priest, the evangelical minister and the rabbi sent by President Clinton. They saw only "official" religious leaders and establishments. Or perhaps it will follow the itinerary of those EU diplomats who visited prisons in which the inmate chosen for exhibition had a bed, a loo, and gold fish bowl in his cell. Typical?

As for Mr Wei, he maintains it was the international clamour of many years that got him out, the annual possibility of a Nobel Prize, and Washington telling the Chinese that unless Mr Wei was released, President Jiang Zemin would not get the full White House welcome he eventually received last October. Mr Wei asked Robin Cook to give him an example of how discreet bargaining has worked; according to Mr Wei, the Foreign Secretary admitted he didn't have one handy.

Western leaders say they bring up human rights at every meeting with the Chinese. But not invariably. Once in Hong Kong I asked an American Under-Secretary of Commerce, just arrived from Peking, whether he had raised human rights with his Chinese opposite numbers. "No, human rights weren't on my list." When I noted that even Schindler had had a little list he rose to his feet with his fists clenched.

In September 1991 John Major went to Peking to sign a memorandum of understanding about the new Hong Kong airport, the first Western leader to visit China since Tiananmen. He was carrying a list of political prisoners furnished by Amnesty. On the plane he talked to me about the list and a possible visit to London by the Dalai Lama, asking what I thought would happen when he raised human rights with Premier Li Peng. At press conferences Mr Major made much of his confrontation with Mr Li and told us that human rights were at the centre of his China policy. Although a British embassy official asked me where the major prison for dissidents was - he had, after all, only been in Peking for two years - I did believe an effort was being made.

Even when Sir Percy Cradock, the Prime Minister's major foreign policy advisor, assured reporters in the British ambassador's garden that the human rights discussions were "just froth ... The airport is the key agreement." I put this down to Sir Percy's famous pragmatism.

It was only after Mr Major's party arrived in Hong Kong that I learnt, from a colonial policy secretary, present at all the negotiations, that human rights had been only diffidently raised with the Chinese. They were given to understand that this

was an issue at home but not a central matter in the negotiations.

This is how it works. The principals discuss. At some point the senior western negotiator informs the Chinese side that a relatively junior official will hand to his Chinese opposite number a list of human rights concerns. Little or no further discussion of human rights occurs. At the end of the meeting the foreign position paper is handed over, and the Western leader goes out to tell the press that he forcefully raised human rights with the Chinese.

This is not normal practice with other countries. "We really tell them off them in Nigeria, for example, or in Bosnia," said a diplomat. "But there's this special exception for China. The Chinese have convinced us that confrontation intrudes into their sovereignty. We play along."

When I reported this to Mr Wei last week, he chuckled mordantly. He recounted a conversation during his brief release from prison in 1993 designed to persuade the In-

ternational Olympic Committee to award China the 2000 Olympics (the play failed). A Public Security officer had come to see him. "Wei, you are wasting your time hurling yourself against the rock of human rights. Some of us want to help you. But your friends from western countries - when they come to Beijing they leave this to their junior secretaries. It's not serious. We laugh at them."

Mr Wei insists that real pressure works with the Chinese. It got him out and it caused the Chinese to back away from Taiwan in 1996 when the Americans sent two naval battle groups near the island.

This is where the way China is reported can make a difference. At least the public knows what's happening, and officials know that we know. Ernest Hemingway once advised young reporters conducting interviews to "Keep asking yourself 'Why is this sonofabitch lying to me?'". On China his further dictum also holds: keep your anti-bullshit detector running.

The author recently resigned as China Writer for *The Times*

## Clunky, chunky and their drivers have a problem, too



NICHOLAS SCHOON

Why "off-road" vehicles should get off my road and off my planet

IT'S a fair bet Gordon Brown will tomorrow put up the price of petrol again and, like all Chancellors since they found environmentalist religion, he will justify it by saying we must all do our bit to reduce fuel consumption in order to save the earth from man-made global warming.

I've got a better idea - with the added bonus of screwing William Hague and his wife and all those other Range Rover drivers, who are probably Tories anyway. Increase the road fund tax on all those "off-road" vehicles which are on road, on our roads, that is - those clunky, chunky, I'm-bigger-than-you types which give a rolling two-fingered salute to the environment, let alone the rest of us road users.

What kind of statement are the people who buy them making about themselves and the way they see the world? Note, first, their infantile desire to be a little higher ... tall man in the saddle indeed. (Except, with Range Rovers, it is often women saying mine's bigger than yours and for some reason they always seem to be wearing green headscarves.) To get ahead, it seems, get an ORV.

Next comes the desire to be different - but in a highly conformist way. Their drivers all want to encase themselves in



Road to ruin: Cars like the Jeep Cherokee are serious polluters

the same kind of chunky box, different in the same way from the smaller, more streamlined and less polluting cars the rest of us drive.

The Range Rover is a typical spewer forth. It started the off-road car trend back in the 1970s. According to manufacturers' figures, the latest best-selling version of this two-tonne monster consumes two and a quarter times more petrol than the 1.6 litre "entry level" Ford Mondeo, the archetypal family car. It produces two and quarter times as much green-

house gas. Both vehicles carry no more than five adults.

Granted, that as the market for these planet-trashers has blossomed, smaller, cheaper off-rovers have been produced. The three top-selling models in Britain, the Land Rover Discovery, the Vauxhall Frontera and the Toyota RAV4, all cost around half the price of the Range Rover and have considerably smaller engines. None the less, the inherent brutality and inelegance of their design compels them to swallow a great deal more

petrol or diesel than the average car - and therefore pump out at least a third more greenhouse gas in going from A to B.

Points A and B turn out to be within the suburbs or inner cities. How strange that these vehicles, made for going up hill and down dale in the great outdoors, are most often seen going backwards and forwards to school, office or Asda.

They are marketed as cars for people who love getting close to wild nature, yet in purchasing them their proud owners demonstrate that they

don't give a hoot about the environment we all share. As for those ORV drivers who insist on installing bull bars, it only shows that they're not too fussed about maiming or killing their fellow human beings either.

There is, of course, no such thing as an environment-friendly car. ORVs offend not absolutely but by degree. And yet there is something extra unpleasant about the Explorer, the Terrano, the Grand Cherokee, and their ilk. It's connected with their sheer bulk, their harsh shapes and that daft statement their owners are making. A Jaguar or a Porsche are altogether politer, quieter, more slippery of showing you have high status and low concern for the environment.

So many off-road cars have now been sold that the average focus group in a key marginal constituency probably contains at least one owner - which gives them pulling power with politicians and all those who rely on marketing data to make up their minds. It is up to the rest of us, no cars or low cars, to take the initiative. People who buy these egregious tanks undoubtedly lack in the sensitivity department. But if we radiate enough shame and scorn, if we sneer at and shun them, they might just start to get the message.

## 'Alzheimer's made me tired, confused and lonely'

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# Getting to the heart of matter

Will the particle physicists at CERN find the essence of everything? By Hugh Aldersey-Williams

GREATER fleas have lesser fleas and so *ad infinitum*, thought the satirist Jonathan Swift. The physicist's equivalent of the rhyme is that atoms have protons and neutrons, and that they in turn have quarks, and that quarks... well, we don't know. It is the task of a massive apparatus now being constructed at CERN, the European Laboratory for Particle Physics in Geneva, to find out.

From 2005, the \$6bn (£3.75bn) Large Hadron Collider (LHC) will start running experiments. "Hadrons" are physicists' classification of the group of heavy subatomic particles including protons and neutrons, and which are composed of quarks. However, it's only feasible to accelerate protons, because they're electrically charged.

The LHC is designed to produce collisions between protons at unprecedentedly high energies. The wreckage from such collisions is expected to reveal whether quarks are elementary particles, and in the process to generate exotic new particles. The first of its giant superconducting magnets, each the size and weight of a loaded truck, was delivered at Christmas and is now being tested.

The LHC nearly never happened, however. CERN was plunged into gloom for much of last year because of budget cuts by contributing countries. But then two things happened. CERN obtained its first major funding from outside Europe. It is one of the main achievements of Christopher Llewellyn Smith, the Briton who is departing as CERN's director-general, to bring the Americans and Japanese, long present in the teams of scientists performing ex-

periments, on board as financial contributors.

Second, after several false starts, CERN's member state delegates managed to agree in December on his replacement. Professor Luciano Maiani, president of Italy's National Institute of Nuclear Physics in Rome, will take over from Llewellyn Smith in 1999.

The recently signed deals will now allow the LHC to be completed three years earlier than originally planned. "For the first time, the US government has agreed to contribute significantly to the construction of an accelerator outside our borders," said the US Energy Secretary Federico Pena, agreeing a package of more than \$500m.

The move would not have come without the US government's decision in 1993 to axe its own planned Superconducting Supercollider (SSC). That project might have gone ahead – and probably put CERN out of business – had it been proposed as an addition to an existing institution, such as the Fermilab outside Chicago. In the event, it fell victim to the hubris of Texas politicians who wanted a brand new facility in their own back yard.

CERN was set up in order to recover Europe's "natural" dominance in particle physics after the US took the lead during the Second World War. It has historically defined itself in competition with American laboratories, as is described in *The Quark Machine*, published last year by the Institute of Physics. The book is an account by Gordon Fraser, the long-time editor of the *CERN Courier*, the centre's respected in-house journal. And it has scored well in this competition, making breakthroughs despite (or because of) national differences.

Some of CERN's success arises because each new experiment builds on the last. The LHC will use the 27km-diameter underground particle track and other components of the current Large Electron-Positron collider (LEP), for example. "Without the tunnel I think it would have been impossible to have the LHC," says Maiani. The Amer-

ican effort, spread between Fermilab, Berkeley in California, Brookhaven on Long Island and other institutions, cannot economise in this way.

In the short term, Maiani must ensure "a lively scientific atmosphere" during CERN's years as a building site before the LHC is completed. One planned experiment involves building a long-range neutrino experiment. The neutrino-generating end of the apparatus will be at CERN, the detector will be 400 miles away in 1,400 metres under Gran Sasso in the Apennines near Rome, a formation of rock with naturally low back-

ground radioactivity which already houses a solar neutrino detector. The experiment aims to discover whether neutrinos, which have no electric charge, even possess mass.

Another research theme is the so-called quark-gluon plasma. The gluon is the massless carrier of the strong force that bunches the quarks in atomic nuclei in groups of three for each proton and neutron. "When you see an atomic nucleus made up of protons and neutrons, you see a collection of little bags within each of which these constituents are confined," Maiani explains. "If you increase the pressure or the tempera-

ture, you diminish the distance between each bag, and in the end the bags fuse. Then the constituents can move from one bag to another and you have created a new state of matter. The energies reached in the LHC should be sufficient to create this fusion at the centre of the collisions."

This fusion will model what happened during the first microseconds in the formation of the universe as the quark-gluon plasma cooled and coagulated to form familiar protons and other particles. The element of competition will be present in both experiments, with similar research

A computer simulation of an event in which the decay of a Higgs Boson produces four muons (yellow tracks). The muons, together with countless other particles (red tracks) are produced in a head-on collision between two protons. The white dots represent detector elements which have been triggered. Photograph: Science Photo Library

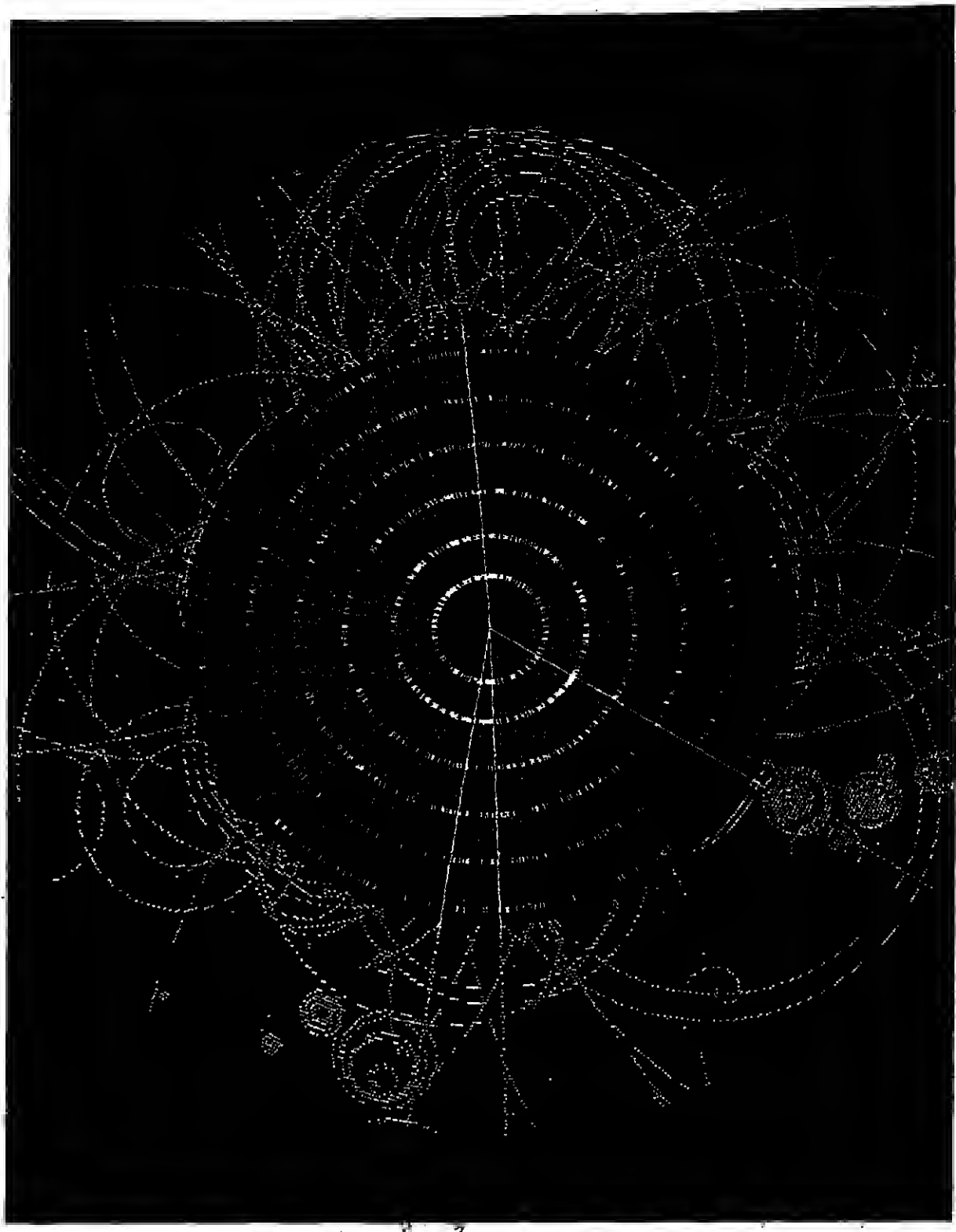
programmes in the US and Japan providing a spur to the CERN effort as well as mutual confirmation of results.

Although it will not run until after the term of office, Maiani's first priority remains the LHC. Its experiments represent a huge increase in complexity even for the 10,000-strong community at CERN: while LEP teams numbered several hundred, up to 2,000 scientists will collaborate on the LHC experiments.

"The LHC is a considerable improvement over the LEP machine in two senses," Maiani explains. "First, with an increase of energy you can produce more heavy particles, and in the energy range which can be explored with LHC we expect to find the supposed Higgs Boson responsible for the interaction on which the generation of particle masses depends. The Higgs Boson is the one missing element in the Standard Model [the consensus view of subatomic particles and forces], and that we have to find."

Then there is another factor. Since quantum mechanics determines that the wavelength associated with a particle decreases with increasing energy, we have to go to higher energies in order to see in finer detail the structure of the elementary particles. Maybe, we will arrive at the point at which the particles which appear elementary today will reveal an internal structure. That happened in the past with the atom and with the proton. Both were considered elementary but then revealed hidden structure. We don't know whether this will happen with the quark."

So the particles we today call fundamental may not be fundamental at all? "That's certainly a possibility." And is there no theoretical lower limit on the size of particles? Absolutely not, says Professor Maiani. Quarks really could have lesser quarks and so *ad infinitum*. This is bothersome for those who would like to reach a state of final certainty about the building blocks of matter, but it is good news for institutions like CERN, helping to ensure their long-term future.



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## THEORETICALLY...

### Learning more/ Early life/ Mine clearance

This is the start of National Science Week. It's the fifth year of the event, which aims to raise public awareness of scientific issues. It seems to be working: a survey last year found that, in its lifetime the percentage of people who knew what DNA was had almost doubled. The proportion who knew that antibiotics kill bacteria, rather than viruses, went up from 29 per cent to 45 per cent. However, there's a worrying one-third of people who still believe that the Sun goes round the Earth. Your task for this week: find out who they are and educate them. Or else attend the week's events, which are going on up and down the country.

Early humans enjoyed boasting about 800,000 years ago, according to new studies by a team at the University of New England in New South Wales. On the island of Flores, 500km east of Bali, they found stone tools apparently left by *Homo erectus* which indicate that early humans must have made sea crossings to get there. "Homo erectus was not just a glorified chimp," said one of the researchers, commenting on the work reported in the latest *Nature*.

Scientists at the Defence Evaluation Research Agency (DERA) have developed a firework-like blowtorch that burns

landmines' detonators and explosives without setting them off. Called FireAnt, it's like a very, very hot version of a Roman candle, producing a tightly-aimed fire beam at a temperature of 1,500C. That's hot enough to burn through at least a millimetre of steel and plenty of plastic.

According to a report in *New Scientist* magazine, bigger anti-tank mines would be dealt with by multiple FireAnts. Each unit could cost as little as £10 each in mass production. With an estimated 110 million landmines still uncleared worldwide, it could be a big earner.

Soya beans and their plant oo-

strogens: maybe they're not so bad after all. A study by a team at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles has found that genistein, a plant oestrogen produced by soya beans, actually suppresses the growth of cancer cells because it prevents them signalling effectively for new blood vessels to grow towards them. The effect: the would-be tumour starves. This, suggest the researchers, is why people in Asia, whose diets are soya-rich, have notably low risk of breast, colon and prostate cancers.

— Charles Arthur, Science Editor

## TELL ME ABOUT...escape velocity

Everyone knows what happens when you throw a stone upwards. Gravity eventually makes it fall back to the ground, accelerating it at 9.8 metres per second per second (so one second after it stops rising, its downward speed is 9.8 m/s, one second after that it is 19.6 m/s, and so on).

But imagine if you threw that stone hard enough, and in the right direction – just off-vertical. It would reach a point where it stopped rising; but because you had thrown it so hard, the surface of our spherical world would curve away under it as fast as gravity made it fall. The object would be in orbit, and remain circling the Earth for eternity unless something slowed it down.

Now imagine throwing another object, a bit faster. It will not enter orbit. Instead it will break free from the Earth's gravity and shoot off into space. It has achieved escape velocity, defined as the minimum veloc-



Big bang: It takes a lot of fuel to get into orbit

ity that will enable a small object to escape from the gravitational attraction of a larger one.

Escape velocity is calculated by the formula  $2Gm/r$ , where  $G$  is the gravitational constant,  $m$  is the mass in kilograms of the planet from which you want to escape, and  $r$  is the distance in metres from the planet's centre. For the Earth, escape velocity at the surface works out as 11.2km per second, or

about 25,000mph in old money.

But accelerating a spaceship to 25,000mph needs a lot of heavy fuel, and huge engines. Earth's inconveniently high escape velocity is why the Apollo moon rockets were the size of skyscrapers. If you want to send people to Mars from Earth, and bring them home again, you would need even bigger rockets.

If you could build and

launch your spaceship from a place with a much lower escape velocity, the problem would be much simpler. The Moon has only one-sixth of the gravity of its parent planet, and hence a much lower escape velocity – a mere 5,300 mph. Until recently though this was thought to be of little use. Even if you built your space-ships on the Moon, you would still need to cart the fuel for them from the Earth, thus defeating the point of the exercise.

But earlier this month, NASA scientists excited the world by announcing that they had detected millions of tonnes of rocket fuel on the Moon – in the form of water ice. Water can be separated by solar power into hydrogen and oxygen. Mixed together and ignited, they produce a lot of energy. That means a Mars rocket could be built and launched on the Moon.

— Michael Hanton

صلى الله عليه وسلم





The Dent family: It is a rare thing for all of them to be in the same room at the same time

Photograph: Steve Forrest

# Juggling: it's not the way to relax

So much to do, so little time. Ann Treneman finds that life is hard for working families

HANNAH MARIE DENT knew that something had to change when, during her afternoon shift at the Golden Wonder factory in Scunthorpe, she forgot to put the salt in the crisps. Her mind was elsewhere - worrying about whether her three children were home from school. "I got into trouble for that and I thought, this just isn't on," she says. Her solution was to switch to the night shift and, despite all the exhaustion and scheduling complications, she is convinced it was the right thing. "I really do like this much better. I can get my housework done. I've got more time for the kids. I can read with them and do their spelling and homework. And we can go to open evenings and school plays," she says. It also means that she and her husband, Shaun, run what is almost a round-the-clock shift system. They figure that, all in all, they have about a half an hour together during the day. "It doesn't do much for your sex life," says Shaun. Hannah Marie says she's not too bothered about that. Tomorrow night, the BBC's *Having It All* series, says that the whole thing started because she was so interested in juggling. "It's the messy bits in our lives that are the most interesting. It's the school run and the pick-up. It's not the meal but the food preparation that is interesting," she says. She and her husband have three children. "Even at the weekends there is a constant negotiation over who is going to do what," she says. "My husband will say, 'What are the plans for the day?' The only real plan is to somehow get through it! And I just really wondered how other families coped with that." The film features three families of five. Anna and David are both lawyers and live in a lovely big house in Kent. Jody is a final-year student barrister and is married to Tom, a prison officer. And then there are the Dents in Scunthorpe. "I was interested in looking at the similarities and differences," says director Peter Gordon. "But the similarities far outweigh any differences and they are always around the key issue. They are always asking: Are we doing the right thing by the children? There is a lot of guilt."

word is a blast from the past. It belongs to the Eighties era of power shoulders and Dallas reruns. Those were the days when people aspired to juggle, and women's magazines carried articles about how to do more in less time. She magazine was "for women who juggle their lives". Then its editor, Linda Kelsey, left her job after finding the juggling too stressful, and the magazine's motto changed. People started talking about simplifying their lives and the women's glossies started to fill up with articles on yoga. But in the real world, our lives in the Nineties have become more, not less, complicated. Employment trends show that we are working longer hours and have much less job security. Time is the most valuable commodity for many families. Stress expert Cary Cooper says: "It is the relationship between the husband and wife that troubles me. Is it a coincidence that we have the longest working hours and the highest divorce rate in Europe?" Two out of three families now have two incomes. Most women with young children work, both out of choice and necessity. For instance, Hannah Marie supported Shaun through years of study to become a health and safety expert and still provides the family's main income while the business finds its feet. The Dents may seem extreme in some ways, but their circumstances are not unusual. W. Stokes Jones, editor of *Planning for Social Change*, said: "Juggling didn't go away. It just became the norm. It is now par for the course. That's the way with

trends. You can tell when they really take hold - they become invisible." And lucrative. He notes that the three fastest growing retail markets are takeaway food, domestic help and childcare. All are the tools of the juggler. Shaun Dent, at 37, tries to cheat time in many ways. He keeps his car clock set 15 minutes ahead. He asks me if I'd like a tea or, even better, a quick tea (evidently this is the powdered kind). When I ask him about juggling, he just looks exasperated. "Parents are always asking whether they're doing the right thing by the children. There is a lot of guilt"

Hannah gets up at about 1pm and does the housework, and some accounts for Shaun, before picking the children up from school and cooking their tea. When Shaun gets home, at about 7pm, he makes dinner for the two of them. She reads with the kids and, at 9pm, starts to get ready for work. Hannah figures she has almost no free time. "But I do always watch *Coronation Street*," she says. Clare Peterson, who created the *Having It All* series, says that the whole thing started because she was so interested in juggling. "It's the messy bits in our lives that are the most interesting. It's the school run and the pick-up. It's not the meal but the food preparation that is interesting," she says. She and her husband have three children. "Even at the weekends there is a constant negotiation over who is going to do what," she says. "My husband will say, 'What are the plans for the day?' The only real plan is to somehow get through it! And I just really wondered how other families coped with that." The film features three families of five. Anna and David are both lawyers and live in a lovely big house in Kent. Jody is a final-year student barrister and is married to Tom, a prison officer. And then there are the Dents in Scunthorpe. "I was interested in looking at the similarities and differences," says director Peter Gordon. "But the similarities far outweigh any differences and they are always around the key issue. They are always asking: Are we doing the right thing by the children? There is a lot of guilt."

much. Anna and David, for instance, can afford any amount of help, but often their only real chance to talk mid-week is during a shared car journey. When you compare Anna and David and Hannah and Shaun - even though there are probably hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of difference in their earnings - what they are actually saying and feeling is very similar," says Peter Gordon. He adds that it seems to be generally agreed that it is the woman who makes the main concessions and that work, for everyone, was an area of calm compared to the chaos at home. Novelist Maeve Haran ushered in the superwoman backlash a few years ago with her bestselling novel *Having It All*, in which her heroine trades in a high-powered job to spend more time with her children and less time writing lists. In some ways the book mirrored her life but, with three children and a full-time writing career she still knows a lot about juggling. "Oh, God yes. I'm just writing a list now as a matter of fact. If I didn't juggle, I wouldn't survive," she says when I ring. "But in one generation we've become much more child-centred as well as more career-oriented, so it's no wonder we all make so many lists." Shaun and Hannah Marie say that their interview is the longest time they've spent together for ages. I ask about the future. Shaun says when his business becomes more successful then he might be able to come home earlier. Hannah says she'll never give up work. "It's my independence and I've always said my kids wouldn't go without." *Juggling is on BBC2 at 9pm tomorrow*

up



From prunes to DiCaprio  
...every Monday, a quirky  
look at the week ahead

## Pruneey toons...

If you've had your head in the clouds of late you might not realise that this week is National Prune Week. With the slogan "Prunes and Prejudice - the sexy new snack of the Nineties", experts at the California Prune Board are on a mission to rid the squidgy fruit of its association with frightful school dinners. They claim research has revealed it's the trendy, sexy personalities who gulp them down by the bucket and only prudish, traditional types who turn their noses up at them. Just to prove it, they hired model Lili Maltese to sprawl across a chaise longue with the word prune tattooed on her breast. Miss Maltese, one imagines, does not need to worry much about prunes; she's due to marry Henry Dent Brocklehurst and share in his £50m fortune and his Gloucestershire pile, Sudeley Castle.

## ... Or go bananas

If prunes are not your bag, maybe you should opt for bananas. This week Sainsbury's gets one up on its rival, Tesco, by becoming the first supermarket to launch an organic version. They sell 48 million of Britain's favourite fruit each month but believe this environmentally friendly initiative will see figures rocket. "They are slightly smaller and thinner than their non-organic equivalent," a spokeswoman admitted, "but they do have a delicious, sweet flavour."

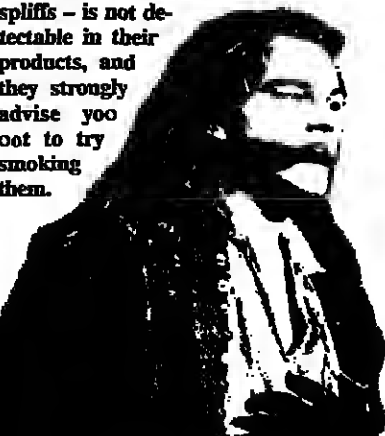


## The iron man

Top banana for millions of teenage girls is Leonardo di Caprio, for whom they endure three hours of the movie *Titanic* up to six times. They should cancel all plans for the weekend. From Friday night his latest effort, *The Man in the Iron Mask* opens at the flicks. The 22-year-old boy wonder faces his biggest challenge yet as he plays the dual roles of the King of France and a low-life prisoner in this convincing drama. But don't worry if your anticipation of the plot is more accurate than with most Hollywood offerings - it is the sixth remake of James Whale's original 1939 classic.

## No smoking

The Body Shop's range of hemp goodies is at last arriving in the shops. Their experts claim marijuana's sister plant can work wonders as a moisturiser, and from Monday you can snatch up supplies of hemp soap, hemp lip conditioner, hemp hand protector and, best of all, hemp elbow grease. But the chain is keen to stress that THC - the mind-altering compound found in spliffs - is not detectable in their products, and they strongly advise you out to try smoking them.



## We knew it was serious when the assistant bought us a drink



DINAH  
HALL

"CAN I help you?" means different things in different shops. In some it can be roughly translated as "I think you'll find these clothes are far too expensive for you, and your presence here is an unwelcome blot on a minimalist landscape", while in others it simply means that the staff have been on an American-style training course and will have their arms and legs pulled off if they can not approximate some semblance of helpful intent. On the first floor of Liberty, however, it is a question that can be taken at face value as

you struggle with the concept of a pair of Yohji Yamamoto trousers with a giant plaited penis hanging over the waistband. And, yes, I felt I did need some help with the Martin Margiela jacket. Really, all I wanted to know was whether you put your arms in the sleeves or in the hole behind them, but what I got was a kind of philosophical treatise. This jacket was all about the "deconstructed silhouette" and was part of a collection which celebrated flatness. "See" said the assistant, holding up a transparent top on a hanger "it

is just like a carrier bag." This was absolutely true, but what she and Martin had not anticipated was that once I was inside it, it would look like a carrier bag containing the weekend shop. I would love to have bought something from this walking thesis, particularly as she gave no hint of having spotted the ingrained Cadbury's Boost down the front of my Marks & Spencer's top. But this shopping expedition was in celebration of the fact that the children are now old enough for my clothes not to have to

double as face cloths (the Boost was mine). And I was just not ready to go from wearing an expression of my children's tea to wearing an expression of a designer's tortured ego. So, to Donna Karan, armed with my sister, who has a great eye and as a lifelong Hennes shopper would, I reasoned, act as a buffer between me and the sales assistant's commission. Would she hell. "I think you have to have the top," she opined. A sleeveless top for £125, that was, I discovered when I got home, "100 per cent polyester". What I really need-

ed was the jacket and trousers but because my sister is older and knows better, I took the lot - plus the scarf which the assistant said I had to have, and who am I - Marks & Spencer woman - to disagree? I can't tell you how much it came to, in case my husband's reading this, but we realised it was serious when the assistant escorted us down to the bar for a drink on the house. "I don't think any cappuccino will ever taste as good as that free Donna Karan one," sighed my sister dreamily the next day over her Nescafe.

I had to remind her that mine didn't taste quite so good as it had cost, um, several hundred pounds. Anyway, I gave her the carrier bag and wrappings to take back home with her - in Norwich, she says, people would pay just to sniff DKNY tissue paper. The new outfit does not fit in with my son's plans to downsize me. He has hidden my earrings and will only allow me to watch his school football matches if I will wear a shell suit and promise not to pick him up in the Espace. But I feel I have a job to do there

on the sidelines - a sort of one-woman UN peace mission. "Calm down, boys" I chided the fathers last week as they roared instructions to the players and questioned the gender of the referee "It's only a game." A game? they bellowed incredulously. "This is football," said one, passionately clenching his fist against his heart. "It's in the blood." It was a moment of pure epiphany: shopping for expensive clothes is just like football - it's in the blood. I think my husband will relate to that.



# Judge Dread

THE BRITISH love novelty records. Put saucy lyrics to a groovy beat, add a dash of sea-side postcard humour and you're on to a winner. Judge Dread, the risqué cod-reggae artist who died on Friday night

at the end of a concert in Canterbury, had a string of Top 20 hits in the Seventies with singles like "Big Six", "Big Seven", "Big Eight" and "Big Ten" which left little to the imagination and were all banned by the BBC. Somewhere between coarse rugby songs, Benny Hill and ska, these proved firm favourites with skinheads, "rude boys" and sporty teenagers chuckling at their first taste of swearing on albums like *Dreadmania*, *Working Class Hero* and *Bedtime Stories*.

Born in Kent at the end of the Second World War, Alex Hughes grew into a 17-stone hulk of a man. Taking full advantage of his size, he wrestled under the name of the Masked Executioner and occasionally served as a minder for the Rolling Stones during their Sixties heyday. He also worked as a bouncer and a DJ in London clubs like the Ram Jam where he heard and played ska and bluebeat, the new rhythms coming out of Jamaica (which later mutated into reggae and dub).

Along with Chris Blackwell's Island Records, the Trojan label was then the biggest purveyor of those musical genres and Hughes soon secured a job with them. Many ska records by the likes of Laurel Aitken, Desmond Dekker, Derrick Morgan and Prince Buster sold through specialist shops which didn't keep up their payments and Hughes proved a natural as a debt collector.

However, he had other plans. Having noticed the huge underground popularity of "Big Five", an obscene version of Brooke Benton's "Rainy Night in Georgia", Hughes hoped for a quick follow-up single to spin. When this failed to materialise, he used the title of another Prince Buster song and became Judge Dread. In Jamaican patois, "dread" is an abbreviation of "natty dread" - i.e. the Rastafarian with dreadlocks -

and can also mean anything serious. (A variant of the same name - Judge Dredd - was used independently for the 2000 AD cartoon character on which the 1995 Sylvester Stallone movie was based.)

A big, burly, blond, balding Englishman taking up this alias was ironic to say the least, but Judge Dread proceeded then to cut a demo entitled "Little Boy Blue" in a small studio (it cost him £8). In 1972, he presented this track to Trojan's in-house production team of Webster Shrowder, Desmond Bryant and Joe Sinclair. As the last recalled in a subsequent interview: "When Dread brought in his demo, we didn't exactly think it was a national hit but we reckoned we could pick up something around the region of 70,000 sales with the help of a change of title."

"You see, the Judge called it 'Little Boy Blue', whereas I thought 'Big Six' would create interest by making the association with Prince Buster's 'Big Five' more obvious. It sold 300,000 copies and spent 27 weeks in the British charts. In 1973, it even made No 1 in Africa."

Many thought Judge Dread was the genuine article and the scratchy, roasty sound of follow-up singles like "Big Seven" and "Big Eight" stands up well with comparison of Jamaican recordings of the period. Indeed, these tracks were often adaptations of popular sides of the times (using Jamaican musicians - like the guitarist Ernest Ranglin - who had settled in Britain), peppered by Dread and Fred Lemon with lyrics bawdy enough to give Mary Whitehouse or the BBC governors a heart attack.

In 1974, the singer left Trojan's offshoot Big Shot label and signed to Cactus Records. The following year, he cut a hilarious version of Jane Birkin and Serge Gainsbourg's "Je t'aime (moi non plus)" which was even more daring than the heavy-breathed original (the Judge mistakenly fondling a transvestite) and became another Top 10 entry. "Big Ten" and "Christmas in Dreadland" followed, the



Dread: ribald, robust humour that was the antithesis of political correctness

latter hacked by a revival of "Come Outside" much spicier than Mike Sarne and Wendy Richard's (of *EastEnders* fame) 1962 original.

Dread carried on with covers, adapting Chuck Berry's banned "My Ding-a-ling" and Sylvia's "Y Viva Espana" tastefully retitled "Y Viva Suspenders", "The Winkle Man" and "The Fifth Anniversary EP" - containing, along with "Big Everything", the truly filthy "Jamaica Jerk (Off)" supposedly introduced by Elton John but in fact a reworking of one of his tracks - proved minor hits for Judge Dread, whose shocking antics and saucy lyrics had

by then been eclipsed or in some cases emulated by Punk. His "Up With the Cock/Big Punk" wasn't really needed when the Sex Pistols - sans Johnny Rotten - could record "No One Is Innocent" with the train-rocker Ronnie Biggs, have Sid Vicious butcher "My Way" or praise the joys of "Friggin' in the Riggins".

Judge Dread milked his cockney following with "Hokey Cokey/Jingle Bells" on EMI for Christmas 1978 but soon settled into semi-retirement. He wrote a column for his local paper, did an opportunistic cover of Frankie Goes To Hollywood's "Relax", oversaw a budget com-

pililation of his catalogue (*Big Fourteen* and *Ska'd For Life* were the latest), played the odd ska revival gig with British bands like the Selecter or Bad Manners.

His stage act, mixing vaudeville, music hall, single entendres and damn-right cheek was undoubtedly a major influence on Ian Dury (check out "Razze In My Pocket", the B side of "Sex and Drugs and Rock and Roll") and Buster Bloodvessel, who used to end Bad Manners' shows by baring his huge buttocks, a very Judge Dread move indeed.

In America, skacore bands such as the Mighty Mighty Bos-

stones, Smashmouth and No Doubt have taken up the shuffling bluebeat rhythms already revived in the late Seventies by the Specials and Madness and merged them with grunge. Little do they realise that until Friday they had a very naughty British uncle called Judge Dread who was way ahead of Bernard Manning and Roy "Chubby" Brown. Judge Dread's ribald, robust humour was the very antithesis of political correctness.

Pierre Perrone

Alex Hughes (Judge Dread), singer/songwriter: born c1945; died Canterbury, Kent 13 March 1998.

# Frank Tindall

IT WAS said of Frank Tindall that he tended the beautiful county of East Lothian as if it were a garden - albeit he was a somewhat ferocious head gardener who was in no doubt as to what was good for the plants in his charge. For 35 years he was East Lothian's planning dynamo, from 1950 to 1975 for East Lothian County and from 1975 to 1985 for Lothian Region. The late Professor John Mackintosh MP placed him as one of the great Scots of his generation in pioneering forms of urban renewal and countryside management.

Tindall came of a family of civil engineers and builders. After Uppingham he read History at Clare College, Cambridge, taking as his special subject the years 1293-1301, the period that saw the growth of towns at the expense of the feudal system, and when the Second World War came he went straight into the Army.

He enlisted in the Rifle Brigade as a private, was sent to the Eighth Army, and commissioned into the Sudan Defence Force. Their military function was to provide cover and supply lines in south Cyrenaica, Libya, and in particular to provide supply points for the circumventing surprise attack on Benghazi. Tindall served in the Eighth Army from the Egyptian border, across North Africa, and up to the spine of Italy.

He was notably reticent about his military exploits, but his defining moment came in the freezing winter of 1945 when he was Major in charge at Klagenfurt. Wood was desperately needed to keep the population and the soldiers warm. He gave orders for trees to be felled. Within hours, an Austrian presented himself: "Sir, I am a forestry commissioner of the oldest forestry authority in Europe, that of the Habsburgs. Please do not cut those young trees; they are not sufficiently mature. I shall show you better, mature trees. 20 kilometres away, which you should cut." He did. Tindall was converted both to forestry management and planning. Years later he was to be a founding father of Central Scotland Woodlands, now a hugely successful environmentally conscious organisation, and of the Scottish Countryside Commission.

Having gained a diploma with distinction from the School of Planning in London he worked for two years with Berthold Lubetkin, on the social and economic aspects of the master plan for the new town of Peterlee in County Durham. There was a row and he resigned with Lubetkin and the rest of the master-plan team.

He had the good fortune then to work with Sir William Holford, Professor Gordon Stephenson and Sir Colin Buchanan, with whom he shared a room at the Ministry of Town and Country Planning. They were mainly concerned with the updating of *The Manual for the Redevelopment of Town Centres*, originally written in 1946 by Mary Miller, his wife-to-be, and with approving, after much modification, plans for rebuilding bombed city centres. (Mary Miller's first impression of Major Tindall was of his wearing a waistcoat and carrying an umbrella which she considered most unsuitable for a student; his of her was of the first girl he had seen wearing the "New Look" - a long brown suit acquired in Canada while in Britain clothes were still rationed.)

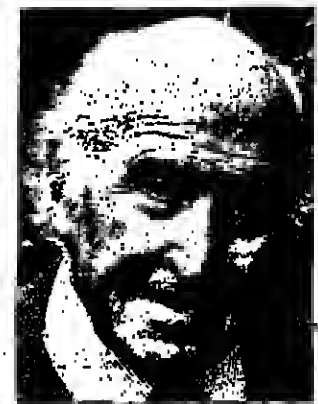
On the advice of Sir Frank Mears, the son-in-law of Sir Patrick Geddes who was their consultant, the East Lothian councillors appointed Tindall in 1950 as their director of planning. There were then only 18 qualified town planners working in Scotland; now there are 1,800. The only concern that the East Lothian selection committee expressed over his ap-

pointment was how long the young graduate bachelor would stay. Tindall, who had a way sense of humour, said that he would stay long enough to make it "worthwhile for us both".

In the 1950s there were three large collieries in East Lothian, two on the coast at Prestongrange, employing 694 miners, and Preston Links, where Cockenzie power station now stands, employing 836 miners, and one on the Fife coast, south of Tranent, employing 595 miners, where the Inveresk research station was built. Tindall persuaded the National Coal Board to landscape this area, and demonstrated how the old scarred areas of the Scottish coalfield could be restored into good, beautiful countryside.

When he moved into East Lothian memory was still fresh of the catastrophic flood of 1948 when the River Tyne lapped at the doorstep of the Town House in Haddington. The survey report examined the river, its history of flooding and the sources of its pollution. In the 1950s most settlements and industries discharged through grossly overloaded septic tanks into the Tyne or its tributaries. By constant persuasion of the personnel of the Lothian Purification Board, Tindall transformed the situation. The Tyne now supports good fish and bird life with salmon and kingfishers as far upstream as Pencaitland.

With difficulty Tindall persuaded the water authorities to lengthen their marker boards to measure the optimum flood flows as well as the minimum flows which were their main concern. This innovation was to be of particular interest after the flooding in 1956. Tindall mapped the extent of the flood plain along the Tyne and then made it possible for any county planning committee to refuse consent for new buildings on it and



Tindall: "inspirational"

also recommended that floor levels of restored or extended buildings should be one foot above the 1956 flood level.

Tindall's greatest legacy was perhaps in the many young planners and architects who came under his influence and went out to other authorities with the ideas they had learnt from him. George MacNeill, now Director of Planning for West Lothian, describes him as "inspirational".

After Tindall's retirement he threw himself into the work of the National Trust for Scotland and the Lothians Historic Buildings Trust. His autobiography will, I hope, be published. It tells of the pioneering days when there was more construction than there has ever been before or since, and, with the disasters of the 1930s still in mind, great public support for the concept of planning. "It was a time," Tindall writes, "when one could stretch the limits of planning to cover all aspects of the environment... embracing Folk - Work - Place": in the tradition of his hero Sir Patrick Geddes.

Tam Dalyell

Frank Purser Tindall, planner: born Englefield Green, Surrey 21 January 1919; Planning Officer, East Lothian County Council 1950-75; OBE 1969; Director of Physical Planning, Lothian Regional Council, 1975-85; married 1951 Mary Miller (two sons, one daughter); died Inverness 11 March 1998.

# Peter Sillett

PETER SILLETT was one of those rare individuals, a Chelsea footballer with a League Championship medal. The Blues have won the domestic game's highest honour only once, in 1954/55, and the tall, hurly defender was a stalwart member of that mould-breaking side.

Indeed, it was Sillett who struck the blow which determined the destination of the trophy, if not mathematically then certainly in the hearts and minds of the Stamford Bridge faithful. With only a handful of matches remaining, Chelsea were at home to their chief rivals, Wolverhampton Wanderers, needing victory to establish what seemed sure to be decisive ascendancy in the title race. Some 15 minutes from the end, with the scoresheet still blank, the hosts were awarded a penalty, and in front of more than 75,000 spellbound fans, Sillett, the right-back, strode forward to take it. Outwardly calm but, as he revealed later, seething with apprehension, he hammered the ball low past the England goalkeeper Bert Williams before being submerged by ecstatic team-mates. Chelsea, for so long the subject of music-hall derision, were Champions elect.

A month later, Sillett was involved in another high-profile

penalty incident which ended less happily. Having been called up for his international debut against France in Paris, he conceded the spot-kick which resulted in the only goal of the game. Apart from that one aberration, however, he played well enough in a side containing the likes of Stanley Matthews, Billy Wright and Duncan Edwards to retain his place for the remaining two matches of England's spring tour, against Spain and Portugal.

Thereafter, he slipped from the international reckoning, his movement a little too ponderous for that exalted level, though other aspects of his game were outstanding. Sillett was a cultured distributor of the ball, his positional play was astute, and he was utterly imperturbable under fire, but it was as one of the most explosively powerful dead-ball kickers of his era that he earned most renown. Indeed, he was a menace anywhere within 40 yards of the opponents' goal and was the author of some of the most spectacular strikes ever seen at Stamford Bridge.

Sillett hailed from a footballing family. His father, Charlie, had captained their home-town club, Southampton, before being killed in the

Second World War, and his ebullient younger brother, John, was to join him at Chelsea, then win fame for guiding Coventry City to FA Cup victory in 1987. Sillett's own career began with the Saints in 1950. Then, after performing creditably in a poor team which was relegated from the old Second Division in 1952/53, the richly promising 20-year-old was transferred to Chelsea for £12,000.

Duly he cemented a berth in the manager, Ted Drake's enterprising side - colleagues included the star centre-forward Roy Bentley and the future England manager Ron Greenwood - and played his sterling part in the subsequent Championship glory. Sadly the Blues did not build on their success of 1955, becoming increasingly unpredictable as the decade wore on and Sillett, an easy-going fellow adept at wicked deadpan humour, matured into elder statesman and skipper of the youthful combination known as "Drake's Ducklings". Had it not been for the prodigious goal-scoring exploits of Jimmy Greaves, they might have been relegated in 1959/60 but they managed to retain their status until 1961/62, when the new manager, Tommy

Docherty, was unable to prevent demotion.

By this point Sillett's top-flight career had been effectively finished by a broken leg suffered in August 1961 and although he had recovered by season's end he was unable to oust the gifted rookie Ken Shellito. There being no place for him in the Docherty set-up, and feeling that his leg was not strong enough to warrant accepting offers from other Football League clubs, he left Chelsea to embark on a lengthy non-League career, at first operating as a player-coach and later solely as a manager.

Among his employers were Guildford City, Ashford Town, Folkestone Town, Hastings United and Hastings Town and he became a well-loved fixture on the semi-professional scene. Between 1987 and 1990 he coached for his brother at Coventry, but it is as a Stamford Bridge hulk of the 1950s that Peter Sillett will be best remembered.

Ivan Ponting

Richard Peter Sillett, footballer: born Southampton 1 February 1933; played for Southampton 1950-53, Chelsea 1953-62; capped three times for England 1955; married (three sons, one daughter); died Ashford, Kent 12 March 1998.



Sillett: a cultured distributor of the ball

## CASE SUMMARIES: 16 MARCH 1998

THE FOLLOWING notes of judgments were prepared by the reporters of the *All England Law Reports*.

### Confiscation order

R v City of London Justices, ex p Chapman. QBD (Div Ct) [1998] 1, Gage 115 March 1998. Since the scheme of the Drug Trafficking Offences Act 1986 was to make sentences in default to be served consecutively, where a judge had ordered that the time for payment of a confiscation order was to be the

length of a defendant's prison sentence, the default sentence came into effect on the date on which the defendant was released on licence and not the date on which the sentence was due to be completed had there been no parole. This problem would be avoided by judges' stating a specific date by which payment was to be made when making confiscation orders under s 6(1) of the 1986 Act.

Timothy Sewell (Sewell & Co) for the applicant; Kennedy Talbot (Customs

& Excise solicitors) for the interested party.

### Planning

Snowdonia National Park Authority v Geogeson. QBD (Div Ct) [1998] 1, Gage 119 March 1998. Where a person had appealed to the Secretary of State against an enforcement notice under s 175(5) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, he could not, at the hearing of an information laid against him for failure to comply with that notice, claim that

an alleged defect in its service rendered the enforcement notice invalid.

Andrew Thomas (Sharpe Pritchard & Co, for Conway Borough Council) for the appellant; the respondent did not appear and was not represented.

Torridge District Council v Jarrett. QBD (Div Ct) [1998] 1, Gage 121 March 1998. There was no room for the application of a defence under s 171B(3) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 where an information had been laid alleging a breach of the

Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisement) Regulations 1992, since those regulations provided a code for the control of advertisements which did not depend on a breach of planning control under Part VII of the 1990 Act, and the defence in s 171B(3) could only be used where the breach complained of was contained in that part of the Act. Timothy Corner (Bazeley Barnes & Bazeley, solicitors) for the appellant; the respondent did not appear and was not represented.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, in Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 3DL, telephoned on 071-293 2802 (24-hour answering machine 071-293 2811) or faxed to 071-293 2801, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements (notices, funerals, forthcoming marriages, marriages) must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

THE OBITUARIES e-mail address is obituaries@independent.co.uk

Changing of the Guard  
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. Company Scots Guards mounts the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Grenadier Guards.

**Birthdays**  
Mr Ben Arie, actor, 61; Mr Matthew Bannister, Controller, BBC Radio 1, and managing director, Network Radio BBC, 41; Miss Sybil Bedford, author, 87; Miss Teresa Berganza, mezzo-soprano, 63; Mr Bernardo Bertolucci, film director, 57; The Right Rev Hugo de Wail, Bishop of Hereford, 63; Sir John Drinkwater QC, a Commissioner of Income Tax, 73; Sir Philip Foreman, former chairman, Short Bros, 75; The Right Rev Peter Forster, Bishop of Chester, 48; Air Chief Marshal Sir Christopher Fordy-Norris, Chairman Emeritus, Cheshire Foundation, 81; Mr David Heath MP, 44; Mr Ramon Hnatyshyn, former Governor-General of Canada, 64; Sir Ewart Jones, Wayneville Professor of Chemistry Emeritus, Oxford University, 87; Sir Anthony Kenny, Warden, Rhodes House, Oxford, 67; Mr Jerry Lewis, comedian, 72; Mr Leo McKern, actor, 78; Miss Kate Nelligan, actress,

47; Mr Roger Norrington, conductor, 64; Mr Richard Pottick, former chairman, Taylor Woodrow, 82.

**Anniversaries**  
Births: James Madison, fourth US President, 1751; Matthew Flinders, circumnavigator of Tasmania, 1774; Georg Simon Ohm, physicist, 1789; Deshaun Robert Smith-Sortwell, novelist, 1864; Aubrey Vincent Beardsley, artist and illustrator, 1888; The Rev John Marcus Harston Morris, founder of Eagle magazine, 1989. On this day: The Long Parliament of England, which sat for 20 years, was dissolved, 1649; the first meeting of the Port of London Authority was held, 1909; Soviet cosmonauts completed an orbit of 35 million miles, 1978. Today is the Feast Day of St Abraham Kidanema, St Eusebia of Hama, St Finian Lobbair (The Lepre), St Gregory Makar, St Heribert of Cologne and St Julian of Antioch.

سكيا في الامل







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FINANCIAL JOURNAL OF THE YEAR

# City wary after borrowing forecast

By Lea Paterson

CITY experts gave a cautious welcome yesterday to reports that Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, is set to announce better-than-expected figures on Government borrowing when he makes his Budget speech on Tuesday.

The Chancellor is expected to confirm that the public sector borrowing requirement

(PSBR) is falling sharply and that the government is forecast to become a net repayer of debt in the 1999-2000 tax year. This would be towards the optimistic end of forecasts made by the Chancellor in his November pre-budget report.

Simon Briscoe, of Nikko Europe, said that although forecasts of a surplus in public finances in 1999 to 2000 could improve market sentiment,

"there is a deeply held cynicism in the City about 'year-plus-one' forecasts". However, Mr Briscoe added that if the Chancellor were to forecast a surplus for the coming tax year "that would be deeply interesting".

The main impact of a surplus in the tax year 1998 to 1999 would be on market sentiment, according to Mr Briscoe, who said: "It would greatly increase the feelgood factor".

He added that better-than-expected public finances could also lift the bond and equity markets. If the PSBR is less than forecast, this reduces the value of bonds that the Government is forced to issue. This fall in supply would push up their price. And a rise in the bond markets of this type would also lift the stock market.

However, he warned that any movements in the markets

would probably be limited. Any likely change in the level of bond issuance is small compared to the large stock of bonds currently in circulation.

Michael Hughes, of Barclays Capital, agreed the market impact of the better-than-expected news about the PSBR would most probably be "marginal", at least in the short term and stressed the City would be more con-

cerned with how the Chancellor intended to spend any spare cash.

According to Mr Hughes, the Chancellor could use any surplus in the public finances in two ways. He could build a war chest to finance increases in spending or cuts in taxes or he could also try to move the UK economy towards being a sustained repayer of debt. If the Chancellor signals he is at least

as concerned about the latter objective than the former, this could prompt a favourable reaction from the City.

Mr Hughes believes the Chancellor needs to become a net repayer of debt and to reduce the sensitivity of the economy to fluctuations in short term interest rates if the UK is to participate successfully in EMU. Last week, the Office of National Statistics revised its es-

timate of fourth quarter GDP upwards by 0.2 per cent. Buoyant economic growth helps the PSBR as it increases the total amount of tax revenues received by the Treasury.

Last month, it was announced that the Government made the highest-ever monthly repayment of the national debt in January. The surplus of revenues over spending amounted to £10.4bn.

## Guru's U-turn keeps market on the alert

By Lea Paterson

WARREN BUFFETT, the legendary US investor who warned last year that American stock prices were too high, appears to have changed his mind and is now saying the market rally has been justified because of low interest rates and the "remarkable" equity returns achieved by companies.

In his annual letter to shareholders in his Berkshire Hathaway investment vehicle, Mr Buffett said there was "no reason to think of stocks as generally over-valued", as long as US interest rates remained low and equity returns remained high.

The apparent U-turn will surprise market watchers who have seen some of Mr Buffett's recent moves into bonds and commodities as a warning of a downturn in the US stock market. However, Mr Buffett injected a note of caution, saying the current "remarkable" equity returns achieved by American companies "are not a sure thing to remain at, or even near, their current levels".

Mr Buffett's new stance follows his declaration in his 1996 shareholders' letter that the US stock market was "overheated and that Berkshire had risked paying too much for 'virtually all stocks.' Since then, the value of the Dow Jones Industrial Average - the leading indicator of the US stock market - has risen by around a third.

Revelations last autumn that Mr Buffett had been buying up US bonds, coupled with news last month that Berkshire Hathaway had bought up a fifth of the world's annual silver supply, convinced many observers that Mr Buffett was anticipating the end of the

US bull run. As usual, Mr Buffett's 1997 annual letter to shareholders was peppered with the type of homespun investment philosophy that earned him the nickname "the Forrest Gump of Finance" from American magazine *Vanity Fair*.

The investment guru warned shareholders not to think of 1997's 34 per cent rise in Berkshire Hathaway's share value as a "great victory". He said: "In a bull market, one must avoid the error of the preening duck that quacks boastfully after a torrential rainstorm, thinking that its paddling skills have caused it to rise in the world".

He added that Berkshire Hathaway only just out-padded the "passive ducks" that invested in the benchmark Standard & Poor's 500 index.

Mr Buffett provided little detail of changes in his individual company holdings, although he did reveal slashed holdings of crude oil built up in 1994 and 1995.

Surprisingly, McDonalds - one of Mr Buffett's favourite stocks - did not feature in the list of "major investments". However, Mr Buffett's letter contained no indication of whether Berkshire had, in fact, reduced its McDonalds stake. In 1996, Berkshire held 4.3 per cent of McDonalds.

Mr Buffett's letter ends with his invitation to shareholders to attend Berkshire's annual general meeting (AGM) in Omaha. Shareholders are also invited to eat with Mr Buffett on the eve of the AGM at Gorat's - his favourite steakhouse. After dinner, shareholders are asked to accompany Mr Buffett to a local Dairy Queen, a fast food chain - which Mr Buffett took control of earlier this year.



Warren Buffett: "No reason to think of stocks as generally over-valued"

## Complaints about gas firms up 80%

By Michael Harrison

THE number of complaints against independent gas suppliers rose by 80 per cent last year as more of the domestic market was thrown open to competition, according to figures released today.

The annual report of the Gas Consumers Council shows that complaints against independent suppliers rose from about 4,500 in 1996 to just over 8,000 in 1997. However, the overall level of consumer complaints dropped by 30 per cent to 53,637 as British Gas saw a near 40 per cent reduction - in 1996 the number of complaints against British Gas taken up by the GCC was just over 51,000 but the figure fell to just over 36,000 in 1997.

The bulk of the complaints, against both British Gas and independent suppliers, continued to concern disputes over the amount of gas consumed and various types of payment and discount plans.

Although complaints against British Gas were sharply down from the unprecedented level they reached in 1996, the GCC's report points out that they were still around the same level as in 1995 and more than double the level recorded in the early Nineties. The GCC says the number of customers who failed to get satisfaction from British Gas was "still far too many when measured against the benchmark of earlier years".

By the end of the year, 4.5 million households in the South-west and South, Scotland and the North-east were free to shop around for a supplier. There are now 20 rival suppliers in the market.

The independent supplier attracting the largest number of complaints to the GCC last year was Calor Gas, a joint venture set up by Calor Gas and Teraco. It was the subject of 1,457 complaints, followed by Eastern Natural Gas, part of the Eastern Electricity group, which recorded 919 complaints.

Northern Electric, which was the subject of a rebuke last week from the gas regulator Ofgas over its doorstep selling techniques, received 292 complaints. But the GCC adds that, in general terms, suppliers with higher levels of complaints also tended to account for a greater proportion of customers who had switched from British Gas.

Despite the overall decline in complaints, the GCC detected a sharp rise in complaints from industrial and commercial consumers. Category A complaints - those dealt with by the GCC directly - leapt by 156 per cent to 1,677 while category B complaints referred to the companies rose by 111 per cent.

The GCC said that the increase was a cause of "serious concern". It added that since this sector of the market had been open to competition since 1992 it would have expected the level of complaints from customers switching suppliers to have fallen.

## ICI agrees huge severance deals for Scottish workers

By Barrie Clement  
Labour Editor

ICI, Britain's biggest chemical company, is offering a group of industrial workers one of the most generous severance packages in recent history. Employees made redundant at one of the group's Scottish plants who move into lower paid work will have their wages enhanced by up to 25 per cent for two years.

Employees within two years of ICI's early retirement age of 50 will be "kept on the books" - even if it means they are paid to do nothing - so that they can qualify for a company pension. It is envisaged that most of them will be seconded to other firms, but ICI will

guarantee a full pensionable wage.

Union officials will seek to emulate the package elsewhere and other companies will come under pressure to match it.

Fred Higgs, a national official with the Transport and General Workers' Union, described the deal as "uniquely beneficial". He said the relative generosity of the agreement reflected the fact that the plant at Cargenbridge in Dumfries, which makes polypropylene, was remote from job opportunities.

The few jobs on offer locally paid far less than the average £20,000 a year the 200 workers earned. He said, however, that the union would be looking for similar agreements where there

were ICI plant closures and where unemployment was high.

The shutdown of the Dumfries works is part of the chemical giant's strategy of moving away from lower margin bulk chemicals to specialise in more profitable sectors such as coatings and specialty chemicals.

The company has already sold its Melinex plant in the Dumfries area, which employs 600, to DuPont. It was followed by the disposal of the more modern of its two polypropylene plants at Cargenbridge, to UCB of Belgium.

The polypropylene works which is being closed was loss-making and it is the first plant where the ICI reorganisation has caused compulsory redundancies. Some 85 of the

employees were transferred to UCB where pay and conditions will be protected for at least four years and where a mirror-image of the ICI pension scheme has been established.

All staff have been promised that no one will be forced to leave ICI employment until the end of the year and that no one will receive less than £10,000 in pay-offs.

Mr Higgs, who negotiated the package, said it demonstrated that where there was a will on both sides it was possible to design a deal to suit local needs. "No one is entirely happy with the deal because they were hoping to work for ICI until they retired, but we had to acknowledge that the site was making losses."

## Irish alarm after punt is revalued

By Lea Paterson

IRISH manufacturers and economists yesterday expressed disquiet following the surprise weekend revaluation of the Irish punt against the German mark.

On Saturday, the European Union increased the value of the punt against the mark by 3 per cent. The punt's central pivot point in the European exchange rate mechanism (ERM) is now DM2.48. Previously, it was DM2.41.

On Friday, the punt was trading at DM2.5, prompting economists to claim the European Union (EU) may not have raised the punt's value by enough. Economists are concerned that financial markets may not see the revaluation as credible.

Jim Power, of Bank of Ireland Group Treasury, said: "They [the EU] should have

done it much more aggressively. A 3 per cent revaluation will achieve absolutely nothing."

Manufacturers, in contrast, believe the punt should have remained unchanged. Irish exporters had hoped Ireland would enter EMU with a relatively weak exchange rate.

Colm MacDonnell, chief executive of the Irish Exporters' Association, said the government had "given away a competitive advantage permanently". Tom Parlon, president of the Irish Farmers' Association, claimed that farmers would lose IR£170m a year.

The EU said its decision to revalue the punt followed requests from the Irish authorities. It added: "The revaluation... will support the authorities in their efforts to keep the Irish economy on a path of sustainable growth with price stability."

## Commerzbank recruiting

COMMERZBANK, a leading German bank, has launched a major recruitment drive in the London equities market to build up a 360-strong team by the end of 1998. A spokesperson said yesterday: "We have been building our equities team especially vigorously for the last couple of months."

## Nike cuts 450 jobs

NIKE, the United States training shoe and clothing company is to cut 450 jobs in the US with further cuts expected elsewhere. A further announcement is planned later this week.

## Smiths names new head

SMITHS Industries, the engineering group, is expected to name Keith Orrell-Jones as its new chairman when it reports its interim results this week. Mr Orrell-Jones is currently chief executive of Blue Circle and has been on the Smiths board for six years.

## Arsenal aims at Wembley

FOOTBALL club Arsenal is understood to be working with property group British Land to win control of Wembley stadium.

## BTR offloads business

BTR, the conglomerate that is turning itself into a more focused engineering group, is close to a deal with CVC Capital Partners to sell its Australian building products division and Formica, its laminates business for £650m.

### STOCK MARKETS

FTSE 100									
Index	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield (%)			
FTSE 100	5782.30	-12.50	-0.22	5861.50	4189.10	3.39			
FTSE 250	5357.80	-20.70	-0.39	5387.00	4384.20	3.01			
FTSE 350	2777.50	-2.90	-0.10	2803.20	2075.70	3.32			
FTSE All Share	2708.38	-1.41	-0.05	2729.25	2089.07	3.29			
FTSE SmallCap	2554.90	18.50	0.73	2536.50	2182.10	2.89			
FTSE MidCap	1365.70	5.00	0.34	1379.70	1225.20	3.27			
FTSE AIM	1081.50	9.90	0.93	1103.90	955.90	1.07			
Dow Jones	8692.52	-57.04	-0.66	8696.19	6856.79	1.62			
Nikkei	17080.14	484.92	2.93	20810.79	14488.21	0.90			
Hong Kong	11057.03	154.56	1.42	16820.31	7909.13	3.46			
Dax	4889.65	50.05	1.03	4885.72	3192.33	1.64			

### INTEREST RATES

UK Interest rates									
Rate	3 month	6 month	1 year	1.5 year	2 year	3 year	5 year	10 year	Long term
UK	7.55	1.30	7.53	0.84	5.58	1.38	5.89	1.83	1.83
US	5.69	0.13	5.78	0.25	5.58	1.12	5.90	1.06	1.06
Japan	0.70	0.19	0.68	0.10	1.81	0.63	2.41	0.69	0.69
Germany	3.51	0.25	3.72	0.33	4.88	0.83	5.48	1.05	1.05

Bond Yields									
Rate	3 month	6 month	1 year	1.5 year	2 year	3 year	5 year	10 year	Long term
UK	124.50	8.50	7.33	6.00	5.50	4.50	3.50	2.50	1.50
US	124.50	8.50	7.33	6.00	5.50	4.50	3.50	2.50	1.50
Japan	124.50	8.50	7.33	6.00	5.50	4.50	3.50	2.50	1.50
Germany	124.50	8.50	7.33	6.00	5.50	4.50	3.50	2.50	1.50

MAIN PRICE CHANGES									
Item	Price	Qty	Chg	% Chg	Item	Price	Qty	Chg	% Chg
Elements	124.50	8.50	7.33	6.00	Debenhams	380.50	18.50	-4.64	-1.22
Greensill Group	470.00	28.50	6.46	1.37	Thistle Hotels	178.50	8.50	-4.56	-2.55
Smith (WH) Grp	541.00	31.50	6.18	1.14	Scottish Power	485.00	23.00	-4.53	-0.93
Sage Group	1357.50	77.50	6.05	0.44	Sedgwick Group	156.50	7.00	-4.28	-2.73

### CURRENCIES

Pound									
Rate	12.00	0.00	19.34	114.10	2.90	110.88	Feb	1997	1998
Dollar	1.6663	+1.04	1.5772	1.6001	-0.39	0.8281			
Mark	3.0329	+0.78	2.7218	1.8195	-0.76	1.7057			
Yen	214.28	+0.42	198.95	127.87	-0.99	123.47			
Index	108.80	+0.30	97.00	108.50	-0.70	104.20			

Dollar									
Rate	12.00	0.00	19.34	114.10	2.90	110.88	Feb	1997	1998
Gold (\$)	295.35	0.80	293.75	159.50	3.30	194.40	Feb	1997	1998
Silver (\$)	6.24	0.05	6.23	Base Rates	7.25	8.00			

OTHER INDICATORS									
Item	Price	Qty	Chg	% Chg	Item	Price	Qty	Chg	% Chg
Barclays	124.50	8.50	7.33	6.00	Debenhams	380.50	18.50	-4.64	-1.22
Greensill Group	470.00	28.50	6.46	1.37	Thistle Hotels	178.50	8.50	-4.56	-2.55
Smith (WH) Grp	541.00	31.50	6.18	1.14	Scottish Power	485.00	23.00	-4.53	-0.93
Sage Group	1357.50	77.50	6.05	0.44	Sedgwick Group	156.50	7.00	-4.28	-2.73

### TOURIST RATES

Australia (dollars)	2.3627	Japan (yen)	205.86
Austria (schillings)	20.43	Malta (lira)	0.6300
Belgium (francs)	59.99	Netherlands (guilders)	3.2774
Canada (\$)	2.2640	Norway (kroner)	12.17
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8477	Portugal (escudos)	296.42
Denmark (kroner)	11.15	Spain (pesetas)	245.89
Finland (markka)	8.8955	South Africa (rand)	7.7884
France (francs)	9.73970	Sweden (kroner)	12.91
Germany (marks)	2.966	Switzerland (francs)	2.3749
Greece (drachmes)	460.91	Turkey (lira)	366.029
Hong Kong (\$)	12.29	USA (\$)	1.5989
Ireland (pounds)	1.1681		
Italy (lira)	2.873		

Source: Thomas Cook  
Rates for indicative purposes only.

Source: Thomson Cook  
Rates for indication purposes only





**GAVYN DAVIES**  
ON SOME  
PRE-BUDGET  
THOUGHTS  
FOR THE  
CHANCELLOR

## Attacks on fiscal stance are just plain wrong

THE Chancellor will introduce his Budget tomorrow with the economy in a highly risky state, and its direction over the next 12 months unpredictable. We are reaching the culmination of the Clarke boom which was unleashed three years ago and which has never quite been brought under control since.

The absence of timely measures to control the boom some time ago now leaves the economy in a more perilous state than was desirable or necessary. Although a soft landing may remain just about the most likely single outcome over the next three years, two other much worse developments – an early downturn in activity this year, or an intensification of the consumer boom, followed by rising inflation and then a slump – are together almost as likely as a soft landing.

The fact that the United Kingdom has once again manoeuvred itself into this perilous cyclical position, in an economy whose long-term health is essentially quite robust, is testimony to a series of well-worn truths – that the British consumer is more prone to credit booms than consumers elsewhere; that sterling is potentially more volatile than other European currencies; that the manufacturing sector wields a more powerful punch in the UK economic debate than is justified by its economic weight; that the labour market is not as docile as some would like to believe; and that politicians still believe in generating "electoral" economic cycles, even though voters now see right through them.

All of these truths have been self-evident for a long while, yet their potential for causing trouble remains undimmed.

The problem is not that a consumer boom is certain in the next 12 months, nor that a sharp economic slowdown is unavoidable this year, but that either of these extremes is perfectly plausible. This makes the setting of economic policy a game of Russian roulette, with luck now being the

main ingredient needed to achieve a soft landing.

Some people will see this as an absurdly over-pessimistic assessment of the state of the economy today. After all, unemployment continues to fall, inflation remains tolerably subdued, and on the latest data economic growth has dropped to almost exactly its trend rate. The economy ain't broke, so why try to fix it? The trouble is that the economy did not appear "broke" in 1972-73, 1977-79 or 1988-89 either, only for it to appear very broke for the next several years. This is the knife-edge on which we are poised.

Those who do not recognise this dilemma should read the minutes of the Bank

of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) February meeting published last week.

Until now MPC minutes have been masterworks of bureaucratic non-speak, successfully hiding any substantive disagreements that may have emerged on the committee. This time, they have been unable to conceal the chasm that divides the two schools of thought on the state of the

economy. Four professors (King, Budd, Butler and Goodhart) paint an alarming picture of an economy which is near to overheating, which is not slowing down, and which is already generating domestically-produced inflation at a rate of 3.5-4 per cent a year.

If their reading is right, then monetary policy should not only be tightened immediately, but this should have happened far earlier and far more decisively – not only before the election, but also in its immediate aftermath.

Yet there is an equally strong, and entirely opposite, view expressed by the four doves (George, Clementi, Flenderlieth and Julius). They see the economy

point rise in base rates. In fact, it is a serious divide about the main direction of the economy over the next few years, and about its underlying structure.

My main point here is not to seek to adjudicate between the four professors and the four doves (who actually count for five, since Eddie George effectively votes twice in a tie-break situation). In passing, I may note that I have much more sympathy for the professors. The real purpose of my argument is to establish that the risks of policy error must be extraordinarily high when two such diametrically opposed groupings can appear on a committee of independent people.

How does all this relate to the Budget?

ling down. In particular, will he tighten fiscal policy so as to allow for a quicker loosening of monetary policy? His failure to do this last summer drove sterling up. There is little evidence of a change of heart.

This view – from the Lex column in the Financial Times on Saturday – holds that the main culprit for the current dilemma is that fiscal policy has hardly been tightened at all, while monetary policy has been tightened too much.

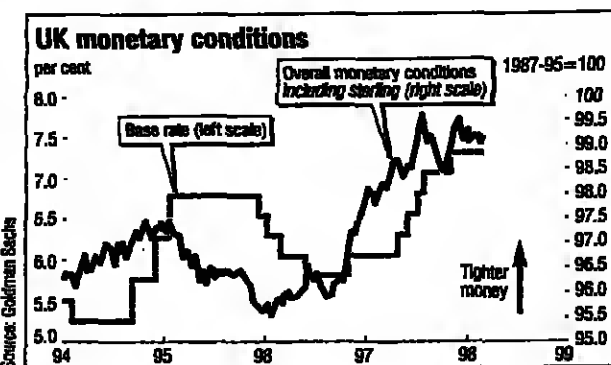
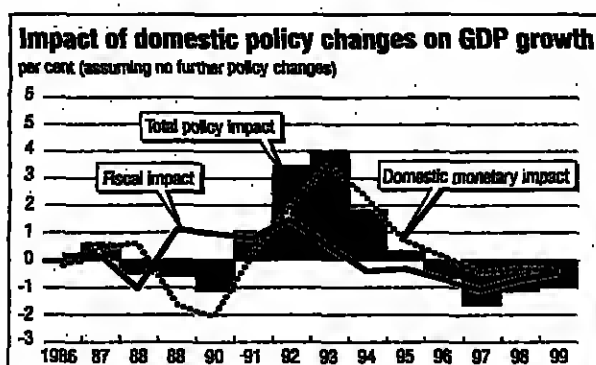
The difficulty with this conventional line of attack is that it is almost entirely unsupported by the facts. The first graph shows that the restraining impact of fiscal policy on GDP – working mainly through extremely tight control over public spending – has been much greater than the impact of domestic monetary policy (ie higher base rates).

This is in stark contrast to the same period of the last cycle – 1988-89 – when fiscal policy was actually eased, and domestic monetary policy tightened much more than it has been this time.

Meanwhile, the second graph shows that while overall monetary conditions have tightened substantially, this is mainly because sterling has risen, not because of any marked tightening in domestic policy by the Bank of England.

Fiscal policy is extremely tight, and has already been tightened very significantly further by Mr Brown, via the public spending austerity of his first two years. He should explain this much more clearly in his second Budget than he did in his first, otherwise the entire public debate might continue to proceed on the entirely invalid opposite assumption.

By contrast, domestic monetary policy has tightened hardly at all in the past two years – a somewhat risky strategy for a newly independent Bank in the face of a surging consumer boom.



## Subsidy dispute splits ITV regions

By Peter Thal Larsen

A ROW is brewing between the ITV companies over the level of subsidy paid to the network's smaller regions. The argument pits Lord Hollick's United News & Media, which wants to reduce the subsidy, against the three remaining independent ITV companies: Border, Channel and Ulster Television.

The subsidy formula, which was set in 1993, allows for ITV's six smaller franchises to shoulder a lower proportion of the costs of running the ITV network.

Normally, central network costs are divided between the

ITV regions by their share of advertising revenues. But because the smaller regions' own costs as a proportion of revenues are higher, they are subsidised by the larger regions.

Apart from the three independent companies three other regions: Yorkshire Tyne-Tees, Westcountry and Grampian – owned by Granada, Carlton and Scottish Media Group, respectively – also benefit from the subsidy.

As a result, three of the four large ITV groups are indifferent about the subsidy because they bear the costs and reap the benefits. Only United News, which does not control a smaller region, loses out. The issue

is particularly pressing because a number of ITV companies are planning to renew their licenses, which were awarded in 1993, this year. The applications must be submitted to the Independent Television Commission by the end of May.

If the level of subsidy is reduced, that will have to be reflected in smaller companies' license applications.

Executives agree that a new agreement must be submitted for approval by the Independent Television Commission before the end of the month. However, no formal meetings have been scheduled before the middle of April.

The argument is caught up



**Lord Hollick: Wants lower subsidy for smaller regions**

In the wider issue of the network's central budget. The four larger operators are currently pondering a major increase in

programming costs as Richard Eyrice, the network's new chief executive, attempts to reverse its sliding ratings.

United News argues that reducing the subsidy would make more cash available for programming. It also points out that smaller companies may not necessarily lose out, as they could use the lower level of subsidy to argue for a reduction in their franchise payments.

However, the smaller companies are adamant that the subsidy be maintained. "There is no doubt the principle will continue," says Des Smyth, chief executive of Ulster Television. "The small licensees can't pay the full costs."

## DTI set to ease rules on investment trust shares

By Andrew Verity

THE Department of Trade and Industry is looking at a change in company law to allow investment trusts, which hold more than 200bn of investors' funds, to buy back shares from shareholders.

Ministers are considering changing a key obstacle in DTI regulations which block trusts from doing share buy-backs because they would lose their status as investment companies.

The decision to look at changing the law follows intensive lobbying by the trade body for investment trusts, the AITC.

The AITC wants its members to be able to use buy-backs to narrow the discounts which exist between the price of an investment trust company's shares and the value of its assets.

Potential investors in investment trusts, including pension funds and insurance companies, have complained that discounts have grown quickly in the last four years as demand for shares in the trusts has dwindled. In 1994, the average discount was 3-4 per cent. Now, some investment trust companies are running discounts of up to 20 per cent.

Ian Sayers, taxation adviser

to the AITC, said: "The DTI have given us a reasonable response and we are optimistic that they are going to take this forward. They are putting it to ministers and we hope to have the issue sorted by April 1999."

Investment trust companies which try share buy-backs risk losing their status as investment companies, which could distort their accounts and alter the company's dividend policy.

In contrast, Inland Revenue rules allow them to keep their status as investment trusts for tax purposes when they buy back shares, exempting the companies from capital gains tax.

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**Media 2-4 yrs ppe to £40,000**  
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مكتب المحاماة



# Human rights: worth a battle?

British lawyers are trying to secure fairness and justice abroad.  
Marie Ryan asks if they are succeeding

SOLICITOR Louise Christian had already carried out trial observations in Turkey and Slovenia when she agreed to join a human rights delegation to south-east Turkey in 1992. But she had no idea how profoundly she was to be affected by this mission.

It was Navros - Kurdish New Year - an annual collision of Kurdish cultural celebration with the might of the Turkish military, with the human rights of the Kurds invariably coming off second-best. Along with Lord Avebury and several other observers, and in the company of Kurdish MP Leyla Zana, Ms Christian was there to act as an independent witness to events that would later be catalogued in an official report.

"We interviewed women and children with gunshot wounds, which was upsetting enough, but the killings continued while we were there." She recalls a series of disturbing events: the funeral march where all the mourners were arrested, one of whom subsequently died in custody; the five-year-old boy shot by the police during a demonstration in Diyarbakir, and the village where they witnessed bodies being pulled from a mass grave.

Louise Christian is one of a number of British lawyers who regularly carry out trial observations and missions to countries with human rights problems. While some, like her, have a background in civil liberties casework or human rights law, they come from all fields of practice.

The Bar Human Rights Committee was set up in 1991 and currently has around 30 committee members and a few dozen supporters. Its broad human rights remit includes assisting lawyers in foreign countries who, in carrying out their work, face persecution from the authorities. Barristers sent to observe trials receive no reimbursement other than the cost of the flight and, in some cases, hotel accommodation.

In 1994 the committee sent Joanna Glynn to Kenya to observe the trial of Koigi Wa Wamwere, arrested on trumped-up charges of robbery with violence and facing a possible death sentence. An Amnesty prisoner of conscience, his case attracted international interest.

So how much difference did the presence of international observers like herself make? "Some of us feel that we positively influenced the outcome. He was charged with robbery with violence, which carries a mandatory death penalty, but he was convicted of robbery without the violence element, which was inconceivable on the basis of the evidence. Either the magistrate believed the evidence or he didn't, so it was a surprise verdict."

Nicholas Stewart QC, chairman of the Bar Human Rights Committee, admits that measuring the effectiveness of missions and trial observations is difficult. "Lawyers in the countries we visit always tell us it does make some difference. At the very least, it supports and

boosts morale for those working for human rights inside those countries."

Most missions result in a detailed report examining the ways the country under examination is failing to meet agreed international human rights standards. These reports are then distributed to MPs, government departments, the media and the foreign government under scrutiny. In the case of Turkey, before its application for admission to the European Union was rejected, they were also sent to the Council of Europe.

The Law Society has an international human rights working party which also sends lawyers abroad to investigate. Like the Bar Human Rights Committee, its focus is on upholding the rule of law and international legal standards, with particular emphasis on supporting lawyers under threat.

Not all investigations are carried out abroad. For example, explains solicitor Jane Deighton, it conducted an inquiry into the death of Northern Ireland solicitor Patrick Finucane, murdered by a Loyalist paramilitary group in 1989 after receiving death threats.

Solicitor Michael Ellman is now semi-retired but continues to carry out missions and trial observations. A background in general, matrimonial and immigration law with mainly French clients has been balanced by a long-term interest in human rights. As well as being a member of the Liberty executive committee, he is vice-president of the Paris-based International Federation of Human Rights Leagues (FIDH) and has undertaken a number of missions for Amnesty International.

Two years ago he went to the

newly-established Palestinian territories to monitor the elections as part of an EU team. "It was very exciting, the people were tremendously enthusiastic, they thought that peace was coming, and that it was really going to work. Unfortunately

account of their very different cultures and ways of doing things. That's a very dangerous argument. The human rights movement believes in the universality of human rights. Of course, one has to take into account cultural factors. But no

**'We interviewed women and children with gunshot wounds. The killings continued while we were there'**

since then everything has gone downhill."

But he remains optimistic that his work in foreign countries is worthwhile. He is dismissive of governments who say that human rights are a western concept which fails to take

cultural factor is sufficient to deprive women or children or minorities of their basic human rights, and the pretence that cultural factors entitle the people in power to deprive others of their rights is completely unacceptable."

Louise Christian believes more reciprocity would be better for all concerned. "I would like to see far more human rights missions from other countries to this country, and to Northern Ireland, than there currently are, but I don't think that being a Third-World country gives you a licence to break international conventions on the way in which a trial should be conducted."

Law Society member Jane Deighton admits that trial observations are limited in what they can achieve, and in recognition of this the Law Society has expanded the brief given to solicitors to include an examination of the wider background against which a trial takes place, "so that the involvement of the Law Society is more profound rather than just a person sitting in court".

Louise Christian found her-

self back in Turkey in 1995, three years after the Kurdish Navros delegation, to observe the trial of Leyla Zana, the Kurdish MP who had accompanied them in 1992. Zana was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

"I've noticed that people have been released in lot of the trials we've attended, Leyla's trial was the exception and that's why it is the one that affects me the most - she's still in prison."

"It was the ultimate in Kafkaesque legal procedures. Most of the first week was spent reading out the indictment - a political diatribe of the most extraordinary nature. Allegations included things like meeting President Mitterrand, giving interviews to American television, and wearing Kurdish colours in parliament. Things that we take for granted in our country are described as crimes in Turkey."



Face of a struggle: Aung San Suu Kyi leads the fight for rights in Burma. Opposition groups have long been subjected to cruel oppression

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### PRACTICE

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Internationally renowned, this leading US firm is seeking ambitious finance lawyers for its Moscow office with particular experience in the fields of general banking or capital markets. Expat salary will be very attractive. Contact Jane Foster. Ref: 1105

► **Corporate** Asia  
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### IN-HOUSE

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► **Commercial/IP Lawyer** London  
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► **IT/European Role** London  
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► **PI** Berlin  
Our client is a major IT multinational looking to hire a senior lawyer with around 7 or 8 years corporate and commercial experience which should include experience of PFI projects. Contact Rachael North. Ref: 84

► **Strategy Assistant** Surrey/London  
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### GOOD JOB HUNTING

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If you want to get into the exciting world of IP and IT litigation, then this market-leading City firm is the place to do it. It will give you the chance to work across the spectrum of its practice, both domestic and international. If you can show 3+ years' post and a personality to fit this dynamic world. Ref: D47633

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**COMPANY/COMMERCIAL** Tn £Partnership  
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**CORPORATE TAX** To £40,000  
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**PENSIONS** To £60,000  
If you are unhappy, do not enjoy working with your colleagues and always close your door behind you, then this top 10 City firm is definitely not for you. Its young partners and employee benefits team will help you make the best of yourself if you have 0-4 years' post in pensions or 2-3 years' post in benefits. Ref: D14412

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If you want to join a firm that will let you develop a practice of your own with full independence and will reward you with partnership if you succeed, then look no further than this fairly new niche City firm. It offers freedom to commercial fraud litigators or shipping/commodities experts with 1-5 years' post. Ref: D41496

**IT/COMMERCIAL** To £40,000  
If you join this recently-established niche IP/IT firm now, you will soon share in its remarkable success. After a phenomenally profitable first few months, the firm, led by a top name in the field, is expanding and needs IT/commercial assistants with 1-3 years' post to play a key role in developing the practice. Ref: D45527

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Expanding medium-sized City firms like this one have a lot to offer banking lawyers with 1-3 years' post. Chief among the benefits is greater responsibility from an earlier stage and far more recognition for your achievements. You will work on a broad spread of matters that will prepare you well for the future. Ref: D27143

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For further information, in complete confidence, please contact Gavin Sharpe, Alison Jacobs or Tim Marshall (all qualified lawyers) on 0171-405 6062 (0171-794 8188 or 0171-731 5699 evenings/weekends) or write to them at QD Legal, 37-41 Bedford Row, London WC1R 4EJ. Confidential fax: 0171-831 6394.

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# How to rescue toads in a hole



Hop to it: The search is on for stranded frogs and toads and when sewage treatment technician Mike Oakley (below) has a handful they are bled to a safer, and more fragrant, watery abode

Photographs: David Ross



Nicholas Schoon finds sewage workers saving thousands of amorous amphibians

FROGS and toads are on the move at this time of year, heading for ponds and other watery places to breed. Most of us now know that thousands get squashed as they try to cross busy roads. Toad patrols spring up, with volunteers plucking them off the highway and carrying them over.

Several very small under-road tunnels have been built around the country so they can head towards their mating and spawning grounds safely.

But they face another peril: huge numbers of them get washed down the drains whenever there is heavy rain. There has been plenty of that this March.

At Severn Trent's Netherbridge treatment works near Gloucester, sympathetic sewage workers have set up a rescue patrol for amphibians which have fetched up in the settlement tanks there after a long, underground journey.

The smooth, vertical walls of the tanks stop the creatures from escaping.

They face certain death when they are moved on to the next



stage of sewage processing.

So the human volunteers cycle round the large works beside the River Severn, looking for victims.

Then they scoop the amphibians out of the tanks and

take them to a wetland conservation area on site.

Eventually they are released in the surrounding countryside. Netherbridge's manager, Derrick Sorrell, says that more than 2,000 are thus saved in a year.

## Frog facts

- Frog numbers are currently declining in over 140 countries
- Drought is the single biggest influence on frog numbers as they lay their eggs and develop their young in water.
- Frog secretions may hold the key to curing ailments from stomach ache to schizophrenia. A painkiller 200 times as strong as morphine has been found in frog skin.
- Frog bones form a new ring every year when the frog is hibernating.
- Some frogs can survive well below freezing. The grey tree frog can survive even though its heart stops, by making its own body antifreeze.
- Frogs can jump up to 20 times their own body length in a single leap. The South American sharp-nosed frog has the world record - 10.3m.

INDEPENDENT

INDEPENDENT  
ON SUNDAY

## Jongleurs Comedy Clubs 2 for 1 ticket offer

In association with Guinness

The Independent and Independent on Sunday are giving readers the opportunity to enjoy the Jongleurs experience. We have arranged for a special 2 for 1 deal whereby readers will be entitled to one free ticket for each ticket purchased. The free ticket is to the same value as the bought ticket and for the same show. Also included will be free membership to Jongleurs Comedy Clubs worth £5.

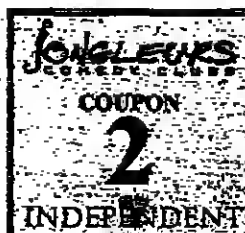
Jongleurs currently has four comedy clubs and a further four will be opening soon. The 2 for 1 comedy card will be valid at all venues.

**JONGLEURS  
COMEDY CLUBS**

● Battersea - 49 Lavender Gardens, Battersea, London, SW11 1DJ ● Camden - Middle Yard, Camden Lock, Chalk Farm Road, London, NW1 8AB ● Bow - Bow Wharf, 221 Grove Road, London, E3 1AA ● Leicester - 30/32 Granby Street, Leicester, LE1 1PE

Opening in Spring/Summer 1998

● Oxford - 3/5 Hythe Bridge Street ● Watford - 76 The Parade ● Southampton - 2/4 High Street ● Nottingham - Castle Wharf, Canal Street



### How to apply

Simply collect 4 tokens from the 7 we will be printing everyday until Saturday 21 March. Then, together with the coupon we will print on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, send with SAE to The Independent Comedy Offer, PO Box 6066, Tamworth, Staffs, B79 7XQ. Your 2 for 1 comedy card will then be dispatched to you. The offer is valid until 31 October 1998

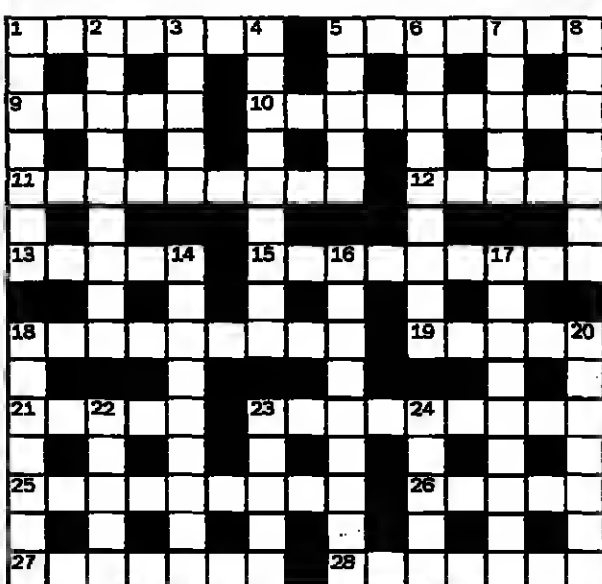
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## THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3559, Monday 16 March

By Porcia



27 Design centre is backed by English dramatist (7)  
28 Make amends when one's caught by émigré European (7)

### DOWN

1 Artist type's small order (7)  
2 Deprived area where a capitalist lives, we hear (5,4)  
3 Divide a duty up (5)  
4 Relaxed, and unaffected by departure (4,5)  
5 Pictorial record? (5)  
6 New home I plan for lady (9)  
7 Fool one individual in the party over time (5)  
8 Meat she cooked is identical (3,4)  
14 What overworked pupils may suffer from? (9)  
16 Favourite uncle is upset about American's ill-humour (9)

### ACROSS

1 Chatter about a number, getting personal (7)  
5 A positive conclusion for delegate (7)  
9 Preserve a great many linked to waterway (5)  
10 Help financially but is moderate about it (9)  
11 Get smart working out first rate trick (9)  
12 Lost Ian's bag containing old Italian port (5)  
13 No longer holding one in

reserve (2,3)  
15 Summarise in one note? Rather vague (9)  
18 Speed's of importance to boxer (9)  
19 Classical style of room (5)  
21 Advantage of being established (5)  
23 Trial able to be arranged between two parties (9)  
25 Key investment in work share agency (9)  
26 Laid up in the French town (5)

سكرا من الاميل